
The Other Body

Persons in Viking Age Multiple Burials in Scandinavia
and the Western Diaspora

Claire F. Ratican

Volume I of II



Newnham College
University of Cambridge
December 2019

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Preface

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit of 80,000 words for the Degree Committee of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Summary

The Other Body: Persons in Viking Age Multiple Burials in Scandinavia and the Western Diaspora.

Multiple burials— generally defined as the presence of more than one individual within a grave— are a common feature of the Viking Age mortuary landscape throughout Scandinavia and the lands of the Western Diaspora. Even though a number of spectacular examples have captured the imagination of professionals and the public alike, multiple burials have not been the subject of dedicated and systematic archaeological investigation. Despite this, they are widely considered in relation to two interpretive themes emphasising either the 'Ordinary' family nature of the burials, or their role in demarcating social deviants and 'Others'. In light of the growing recognition that concepts of identity are not static, one-dimensional or universal, I argue that a framework of personhood may better illuminate the nature of the multiple burial rite and its role in producing Viking Age persons. To do so, Viking Age burials located across the lands of the Western Diaspora and the urban trading centres of Kaupang and Hedeby were drawn together to produce an original corpus of multiple burials.

The multiple burial corpus was approached using a perspective grounded in relationality and the ontological turn, which focused on the relationships between various components of the burials, and how persons were produced through these interactions. The analysis centred on three types of beings— humans, animals and things— to explore the ways in which they related and mutually constituted the personhood of the other. The results demonstrate that, firstly, temporality was a key component in the physical construction of Viking Age multiple burials and the ontological construction of Viking

Age persons, and secondly, that the shared bodily experiences of humans, animals and things suggest that persons were potentially conceptualised as 'not of one shape' in Viking Age minds. While this study firmly situates the multiple burial rite within the wider suite of normative burial practices observed across the Viking World, it also builds upon a developing discourse in the Scandinavian tradition, which is increasingly revealing the fluidity of 'being' across human, animal and thing bodies in Iron Age myths and material culture. The research poses the question: is it time for us to reconceptualise the multiple burial rite to acknowledge the potential personhood of 'other bodies'?

Claire F. Ratican

*Department of Archaeology
University of Cambridge*

Acknowledgements

As it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a metropolis to write a doctoral thesis. The possibility of undertaking such an endeavour would not have presented itself without the generous funding made available to me through the Cambridge Australia Newnham Scholarship, endowed by the late Professor Jan Anderson in collaboration with Cambridge Australia. I offer my deepest gratitude to Jan and the Cambridge Australia Scholarship team for all their support; I am extremely honoured and proud to be the first ever Cambridge Australia Newnham Scholar. In addition to the funding I received from Cambridge Australia, I was also awarded a number of smaller grants—including the Kathleen Hughes Memorial Fund administered by Newnham College and the Dame Bertha Phillpotts Memorial Fund administered by the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic Studies—which allowed the archival work and attendance at conferences that so enriched the ideas contained herein.

Equally, this research would not have been possible without the expert guidance and support of my supervisors, Dr James Barrett (Deputy Director of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research) and Dr Marianne Hem Eriksen (Associate Professor of Archaeology at the University of Oslo). In these two supervisors, I had the best of both worlds... James, you brought your characteristic reason and method to my most abstract and muddled thoughts, with a kindness, belief and patience that is seldom found. Thank you for taking a leap of faith with me. And Marianne, above all things, you have guided me to an intellectual world in which dualities are questioned and assumptions are challenged; I very much look forward to exploring the richness that awaits in the interstices of our archaeological categories in the years to come.

I also must thank Dr Catherine Hills whose generosity knows no bounds. Even in your retirement, your commitment to my intellectual and personal well-being continually reoriented me towards my goal in times when I was floundering, and I owe much of the completion of this research to you. There have been many others who have played an influential part in my doctoral journey; my heart-felt thanks go to Camilla Wenn (Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo), whose thoughtful friendship brought Kaupang to my fingertips and compassion in my hour of need; and Rúnar Leifsson (University of Iceland), who helped me decode the seemingly impenetrable corpus of Viking Age burials in Iceland; and Cat Jarman, who graciously invited me to take part in her excavation work at Repton in Derbyshire. My colleagues in the Department of Archaeology here in Cambridge also have my warmest gratitude, particularly Kevin Kay, Jess Thompson and last, but certainly not least, Jeremy Bennett. You are a true friend.

Residing between the lines of each page hereafter are the innumerable conversations and experiences I have shared with my friends here in Cambridge, exposing me to so many new and different ways of thinking and being. I have learnt so much from you all and have found in each of you a forever-friend; Kate Crowcroft, Tatiana Rostovtseva, Christoph Großbaier, C.J. Rauch, Charlotte Robinson, Thea Chesterfield, Anna Grunseit and Dan Yates of the 'Inside Voices', and Nadya Pohran, Leo de Jonge, Mie Monti, and past and present Blues Women.

Finally, I must thank my family— my parents Judith and Mark, for gifting me wonder in pursuit of knowledge, my unflappable sister Rachael, and my big sister Sarah, a woman of unparalleled perseverance, strength and grace.

Lastly, there are no words to describe the depth of my thanks and love for Chris Callaghan, who carried me to the finish line when I could no longer walk. This is for you.

In Memoriam

Professor Jan Anderson 1932–2015

and

Rita ‘Kelley’ Ritchie 1944–2014

Frances Dooley 1947–2015

Thijlbert Duvekot 1965–2016

Richard Mathieson 1946–2016

Kurt Ratican 1940–2018

Selkie Ratican 2003–2018

Melva ‘Meg’ Maxwell 1925–2019

Christine Newton 1955–2020

Table of Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Summary</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>xv</i>
Introduction	1
Research Focus	3
Scope of Study	4
Research Materials and Methods	6
<i>Data Collection</i>	7
<i>A Relational Approach</i>	9
Definitions and Challenges	11
Limitations	19
Thesis Structure	20
The Ordinary and the Other Multiple Burial in the Research Landscape	23
Viking Age Multiple Burials	23
The Ordinary: Family and Kinship	27
<i>Family</i>	28
<i>Biological and Affinal Kinship</i>	30
<i>Social Kin: Mutuality of Being</i>	37
The Others: Sacrificial Victims, Deviants and Slaves	41
<i>Human Sacrifice</i>	42
<i>Deviant Burials, Deviant People?</i>	47
Not Ordinary nor Other: Where to from Here?	53
Multiple Burial Across the Viking World	56
Single versus Multiple Burial	56
Multiple Burials in the Landscape	60
<i>Landscape Choice</i>	63
Multiple Burial Demographics	68
Number of Individuals	72

<i>Double Burial</i>	73
<i>Triple Burials</i>	88
<i>Quadruple+ Burials</i>	91
Spatial Relations	95
Temporal Relations	115
<i>Burial Sequence</i>	116
The Intersection of Spatiality and Temporality	126
The Nature of Multiple Burial	131
 Producing Persons in Multiple Burial	 134
Personhood and Embodiment	134
Bodily Experiences	140
<i>The Lived Body</i>	141
<i>The Body at Death</i>	143
<i>Material Relations</i>	148
Modes of Burial	155
<i>Cremation versus Inhumation</i>	155
<i>Handling the Body</i>	157
Persons Through Multiple Burial	171
 Animal–Human Multiple Burials	 174
Animals: Objects or Subjects?	175
Modes of Burial	184
<i>Animal Bodies</i>	186
<i>Whole Bodies</i>	190
<i>Body Parts</i>	203
Human–Persons, Animal–Persons, and Cyborgs	212
 Thing–Human Multiple Burials	 216
A Note on Nomenclature	217
Some Background to Ceremonial Modification in the Viking Age	218
A Conceptual Framework for Objects	220
Ceremonially Modified Weapons in Viking Age Burials	226
Modification Practices	229
<i>Breaking versus Bending: Two sides of the same coin?</i>	230
<i>Collective Modification: Power in Numbers?</i>	242

Modes of Burial	246
<i>Modification and Rite Type</i>	247
<i>Burial Arrangement</i>	249
<i>Thing Bodies: Wholes and Parts</i>	251
<i>Bodily Engagement</i>	255
<i>Echoed Motifs</i>	261
Ceremonial Modification and Thing–Persons	269
The Other Body Producing Personhood	273
The Nature of Multiple Burial	274
<i>Retiring Deviancy</i>	274
<i>Belonging to Land</i>	276
The Constitution of Persons	279
<i>Producing Persons Through the Body</i>	279
<i>Producing Persons Through Shared Time</i>	282
Persons 'Not of One Shape'	287
Viking Age Persons	291
Final Thoughts	293
Addressing the Research Aims	293
Future Research Directions	295
Closing	298
Bibliography	299

List of Tables

Table 1. Number of burials by region.....	57
Table 2. Number of burials by study area.	57
Table 3. Frequencies of multiple burial (MB) for each region.	59
Table 4. Frequencies of sex/gender data by burial type. Data available for 23% (n=484) of SBs and 64% (n=137) of the individuals in MBs.	70
Table 5. Frequencies of age data for SBs and MBs. Data unavailable for 85% (n=1797) of SBs and 40% (n=87) of individuals in MBs.	71
Table 6. Frequency of double, triple, and quadruple+ burials.....	73
Table 7. Frequencies of sex/gender and age combinations in double burials. M= male; F= female; U= unknown; A= adult (20≤); S= subadult (19≥).	73
Table 8. Ages of individuals in male–female double burials, where known.	76
Table 9. Ages of individuals in male–male double burials, where known. Adult–Subadult burials (G1746 and G2087) given for comparison.	80
Table 10. Shared traits of the all-female double burials found at Kaupang.	83
Table 11. Age combination in double burials with sex/gender included where known. Asterisk denotes gender determination in the absence of osteological sex.	87
Table 12. Frequencies of sex/gender and age as they occur across types of multiple burial.....	89
Table 13. Sex and age combinations of individuals within triple burials (where at least one individual could be aged). For age band information see Appendix 2.	90
Table 14. Individuals in MBs containing four or more people.	91
Table 15. English MBs plotted by temporal sequence and spatial configuration showing structural composition in the format [structural elements / context in which remains were found]. See end of Appendix 3 for abbreviations.	97
Table 16. Manx MBs plotted by temporal sequence and spatial configuration showing structural composition. See end of Appendix 3 for abbreviations.	99

Table 17. Scottish MBs plotted by temporal sequence and spatial configuration showing structural composition. See end of Appendix 3 for abbreviations.	102
Table 18. Irish MBs plotted by temporal sequence and spatial configuration showing structural composition. See end of Appendix 3 for abbreviations.	104
Table 19. Icelandic MBs plotted by temporal sequence and spatial configuration showing structural composition. See end of Appendix 3 for abbreviations.	107
Table 20. Kaupang's MBs plotted by temporal sequence and spatial configuration showing structural composition. See end of Appendix 3 for abbreviations.	111
Table 21. Hedeby's MBs plotted by temporal sequence and spatial configuration showing structural composition. See end of Appendix 3 for abbreviations.	114
Table 22. Frequencies of burials classified on the basis of temporal sequence of inhumations. Temporal sequence unknown for n=42 burials (or 46% of data). Total percentages are relative proportion of 49 burials.	116
Table 23. Frequencies of MB temporal sequences by study area.	117
Table 24. Frequencies of consecutive burials whose date range indicates the interment of individuals over generations. Generation was calculated by dividing the total number of years represented in the date range by a generational average of 30 years (Stoodley 1999:119; Sayer 2010:69). 123	
Table 25. Frequencies of relational placement of graves within MBs for each temporal sequence type (where known). Total percentages are relative proportion of 37 burials.	127
Table 26. The relationship between context–use and spatial placement.	128
Table 27. Frequencies of context use within MBs for each temporal sequence type (where known). Total percentages are relative proportion of 48 burials.....	128
Table 28. Relative frequencies of context use in relation to study area. Context could not be established in three burials.	129
Table 29. Rate of deposition of grave goods in both burial types.	151
Table 30. Use of inhumation or cremation rites in MBs by temporal type. ..	157

Table 31. MBs containing individuals in confirmed physical contact. F = female; M = male; C = child; U = unknown.	163
Table 32. MBs containing individuals in possible physical contact. F = female; M = male; C = child; A = adult; U = unknown.	163
Table 33. Frequencies of bodily positioning between SBs and MBs. Positions unknown for n= 1636 (or 77%) of SBs and n= 156 (or 73% of data) for MBs.	168
Table 34. Frequencies of body positioning between SBs and MBs in relation to the three major modes of placement.....	168
Table 35. Major modes of animal deposition in Viking Age burials.	184
Table 36. Proportion of each animal type associated with human inhumations and human cremations.....	187
Table 37. The relative proportion of animals (by type) deposited in a whole or partial state. The condition of 77 animal individuals was unknown. 'Other' category comprises birds (n=2), cats (n=2) and a bear (n=1).....	188
Table 38. Relative proportion of whole and partial animal deposition compared to human data.	189
Table 39. Relative frequencies of context use for deposition of animals in relation to humans, as compared to same spatial format used in human MBs. Context unknown for n=21 animals.	190
Table 40. Relative frequencies of whole horses and whole dogs in spatial relation to the human deceased.	193
Table 41. Relative proportion of bodies placed in contact with others in burial.	198
Table 42. Frequencies of dismemberment and decapitation.....	201
Table 43. Relative proportion of MBs and SBs containing animals.....	202
Table 44. Animals represented by a single or group of part(s) with description of body part, if known.	204
Table 45. Frequencies of burials containing CM weapons by total corpus for each study area.	227
Table 46. Frequencies of CM exhibited by each class of weapon against total corpus of weapons.....	228
Table 47. Frequency of modification type of CM weapons.	230

Table 48. CM weapon sets. Modification type relates only to swords and spears.

*Swordle Bay sword cannot be confirmed as intentional..... 244

Table 49. Frequency of CM weapon depositions compared with the relative proportion of weapon combinations calculated by Solberg (1985). The majority of burials (n=20) from the Kilmainham–Islandbridge complex in the current dataset have been excluded due to weak provenancing. The frequencies of burials for Solberg’s total corpus (total n= 3796) has been calculated from the percentages given in the text, figures are approximate due to differences in rounding. The absolute and relative frequencies of the professionally excavated sample (total n=47) are those given in Solberg’s paper. 245

Table 50. Proportion of burials containing CM weapons by rite type for each region. 248

Table 51. Relative proportion of modification types in relation to burial rite. Total of ceremonially modified weapons in cremations n=11 and inhumations n=46 (where burial rite is known). Each type of modification for weapons with multiple modifications has been counted once each..... 249

Table 52. Relative frequencies of context use for deposition of weapons in relation to humans, compared to the same spatial format used in animal-human burials and all-human MBs. Context unknown for n=43 weapons. 250

Table 53. Comparison of the relative frequency of deposition in whole or partial state between weapons, animals and humans. 252

Table 54. Relative frequency of the state of deposition for each weapon type. 252

Table 55. Proportion of individuals placed in bodily contact with each other. Each weapon here conceptualised as a body. 260

List of Figures

Figure 1. Schematic of Litlu-Núpar burials. Graves outlined in black; postholes shaded dark grey; other features shaded pale grey. Grey dashed line indicates horse graves associated with individuals in boat burial. Based upon illustration from Roberts and Hreiðarsdóttir (2013:111).....	1
Figure 2. Proportion of multiple burials as a percent of total burial corpus for each area.....	58
Figure 3. Distribution of MBs across the Western Diaspora. The Kaupang and Hedeby cemeteries are represented by a single large dot each.	61
Figure 4. Distribution of MBs (red) amongst wider distribution of SBs (grey) across Iceland.	62
Figure 5. Site plan of Westness cemetery. Figure amended from Sellevold (1999:6 fig.2). VA MBs = red; VA SBs = grey; possible VA SBs = dotted grey; Earlier lintel burials = black.	64
Figure 6. Balladoole boat burial cairn at entrance to prehistoric enclosure. After Wilson (2008:39).....	65
Figure 7. Placement of boat burial (male's grave indicated in orange) amongst earlier Christian burials. After Bersu and Wilson (1966:5) and Wilson (2008:40).	65
Figure 8. Distribution of MBs (red) amongst all other SBs (grey) at Kaupang.	66
Figure 9. Relative frequencies of each age-band as recorded for MBs and SBs.	71
Figure 10. Relative frequency of age groups in relation to each type of MB.	92
Figure 11. Dates of individual graves based upon artefact typologies as given by Stylegar (2007:103–128).....	121
Figure 12. Burials exhibiting use of boulders to restrain deceased. A) Ka.262 [G2050]. After Blindheim et al. (1995:122, fig.13). B) Ka.297 [G2073]. After Blindheim et al. (1995:121, fig.11). C) Hedeby 86 [G347]. After Arents & Eisenschmidt (2010:309, tab.11). D) Burial from Vað [G1882] in Iceland. After Kristinsdóttir (1988:93).....	149
Figure 13. Arrangement of bodies in boat burials. Solid red lines denote confirmed positioning, broken red lines show possible positioning. Circles at each end of a body indicate that head position could not be ascertained.	

Solid and broken black lines denote confirmed and possible burial structures, respectively.....	159
Figure 14. Arrangement of bodies along the keel line. A) Ka.257-259 at Kaupang. After Blindheim et al. (1995:56 fig.1). B) Ka.294-297 [G2073].	158
Figure 15. Arrangement of bodies at Ballateare [G2012]. Amended after Bersu & Wilson (1966:44).	162
Figure 16. Arrangement of bodies at Sedgeford [G204]. Amended after Cross (2011:203).....	162
Figure 17. Female laying on the right arm of male in Hedeby Sch.2/3 [G602]. After Arents and Eisenschmidt (2010:342 taf.44)	164
Figure 18. Sk.3 turned towards Sk.2, appearing to grasp their arm in Ka.274/275 [G2059]. After Blindheim et al. (1995:130 fig.7).	164
Figure 19. Relative frequencies of bodily orientations based on head position for multiple and single burials. For ease of plotting, a logarithmic scale was used with a base of 2.....	170
Figure 20. Bodily arrangement of animals with humans. Red line denotes human bodily orientation, black lines denote animal bodily orientation. Circular terminations indicate orientation of the head. A) Mirrored human and horse in Gr.3 at Ytra Garðshorn (after Eldjárn & Friðriksson 2016:157 mynd.68). B) Perpendicular human and dog in Gr.2 at Vað (after Kristinsdóttir 1988:93). C) Mirrored human and dog in Ka.218 (after Blindheim & Heyerdahl-Larsen 1995:52 fig.49).	195
Figure 21. Female laying her head on the rump of her horse at Sedgeford, England (after Cross 2011:203 fig.4).....	197
Figure 22. Dog curled up with head on female's lap at Machrins, Scotland (after Ritchie et al. 1981:282 pl.14).....	197
Figure 23. THG east of Hedeby boat chamber grave [G1052] (Excerpt after Arents and Eisenschmidt 2010:344 taf.46).....	200
Figure 24. Burial of four subadults lain upon each other in Gr.360-363 at Repton [G192] after Kjølbye-Biddle and Biddle (1992:48 fig.9)	200
Figure 25. A human individual composed of numerous animal bodies on a mount from Vendel grave 1. Drawing by O. Sörling (Stolpe and Arne 1927: pl. IX). After Hedeager (2011:74 fig.4.19).....	202

Figure 26. Artistic reconstruction of the ‘Pagan Lady’ burial [G2033]. After Gardela (2014:35 fig.11). Drawing by Mirosław Kuźma. © Leszek Gardela and Mirosław Kuźma.....	207
Figure 27. Placement of animal parts A) Horse jaw by head of Ka.274 [G3000]. Excerpt after Blindheim et al. (1995:79 fig.15.3). B) Cow jaw placed on face of deceased in Inchicore 1934A [G1931] in Ireland. After Harrison & O Floinn (2014:279 ill.167). C) Sheep jaw placed at feet of four subadults in Repton 360-363 [G192], England. After Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle (1992:48 fig.9). D) Butchered animal bones scattered over/around legs of individual in South Great George's Street F342 [G2002], Ireland. After Harrison & O Floinn (2014:278 ill.166).....	209
Figure 28. Photograph of Repton 511 showing placement of boar's tusk and jackdaw humerus. After Jarman et al. (2018:4 fig.2).....	210
Figure 29. Sword from Machrins, Colonsay, Inner Hebrides. SCRAN 000-000-099-757-C © National Museums Scotland (2019)	234
Figure 30. X-ray of the hilt of sword from Cumwhitton 3, Cumbria (after Paterson et al. 2014:84 pl.46).	237
Figure 31. The Workington (West Seaton) sword showing two bends; one at grip and the other at mid blade (after Edwards 2004:124 fig.1).	237
Figure 32. Sword from Hesketh-in-the-Forest cremation [G164]. (Hodgson 1832 pl.II).	238
Figure 33. Sword from Ka.277 [G2060]. Excerpt after Blindheim & Heyerdahl-Larsen (1995:123 fig.15).....	238
Figure 34. Spearheads from Hesketh-in-the-Forest [G164]; one bent at neck, the other bent at point. After Hodgson (Hodgson 1832 pl.II).....	239
Figure 35. Bent spearhead (D375) from Kilmainham 1845 [G1958], Dublin. After Harrison & Ó Floinn (2014:109 ill.51.c).	239
Figure 36. Struck boss from Islandbridge 1869 [G1946]. After Harrison & Ó Floinn (Harrison & Ó Floinn 2014:118 ill.56.a).....	241
Figure 37. Westness Boss from G2367 at the National Museum of Scotland. (Viking Age Compendium 2019).....	241
Figure 38. Swords represented by singular parts. Red figures represent portions deposited.	254
Figure 39. Swords deposited with parts missing. Red figures represent missing elements.	254

Figure 40. Placement of swords near the body. Asterisks denote placement of sections of the Woodstown [G2007] sword.	258
Figure 41. Placement of spearheads near the body. Asterisks denote placement of sections of the Woodstown [G2007] spear.	258
Figure 42. Interaction between sword body and human body. A) Cumwhiton 3 [G138]. Skeleton superimposed for representational purposes. After Sayer et al. (Sayer et al. 2019). B) Inchicore 1934C [G1933]. After Harrison & Ó Floinn (2014:272 ill.161). C) Hedeby 319 [G581]. After Arents & Eisenschmidt (2010:327 taf.27).	260
Figure 43. Balnakeil burial [G2246] during excavation. Note shield and spear arrangement over his head and scabbard and sword in lower levels under his body. After Batey & Paterson (2013:634 fig.3) © Highland Regional Council.	263

Introduction

On a grassy slope on the bank of the River Laxá is the abandoned farmstead of Litlu-Núpar in Iceland. In the summer of 1915, a boy from the nearby town of Laxamýri was walking amongst the heather when he followed a honeybee into a nearby hummock, hoping to find its nest. Indeed, the young man found the nest of bees, but was more surprised to find that they had made their home inside the cavity of a human skull. Thus emerged the Litlu-Núpar burials, of whose complexity we would only come to fully appreciate almost a hundred years later.

Initial excavation in 1915 by the State Antiquarian, Matthías Þórðarson, revealed just two burials but, almost 90 years later, archaeologist Adolf Friðriksson surveyed the site to locate the 1915 burials and discovered a grave field of nine Viking Age burials. The grave field's centrepiece was a seven-meter-long boat containing the remains of three individuals, around which a number of related burials were positioned (Fig.1).

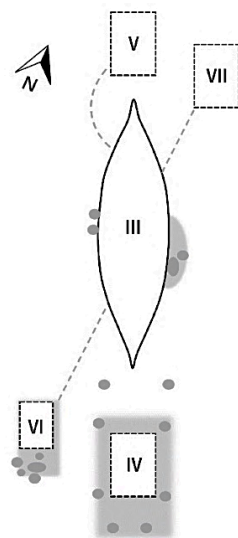


Figure 1. Schematic of Litlu-Núpar burials. Graves outlined in black; postholes shaded dark grey; other features shaded pale grey. Grey dashed line indicates horse graves associated with individuals in boat burial.

Based upon illustration from Roberts and Hreiðarsdóttir (2013:111).

A wooden superstructure— perhaps a causeway or canopy— is thought to have connected the most southerly burial with the central boat burial, serving as just one mechanism through which the surrounding burials were interconnected. But, alongside this spatial complexity, this burial group also demonstrates a complex temporal dimension, for which the excavators suggest a sequence of events:

“The first deceased is temporarily interned in a shallow grave, along with a dog (Burial IV). The boat is relocated to the grave field, the boat grave dug and prepared, along with a horse grave (Burial V). When the chosen day comes, the first deceased is transferred to the boat, perhaps hidden from view (or hidden from the view of some non-privileged part of the audience). During this process, a few decorative items are lost from the external clothing and remain in Burial IV. Some of the dog bones are removed - but not the skull. Burial III is closed, along with Burials IV and V, and the temporary structures removed. A few years later, a second individual dies. Burial III is reopened, and the second individual - a family member - is added. At this time a horse is led to Burial VI, slaughtered and buried. This process is then repeated when a third family member dies. Burial III is re-opened, a body added, and a third horse buried nearby (Burial VII).”

(Roberts & Hreiðarsdóttir 2013:126-7)

The Litlu-Núpar burials are a fine example of how modern archaeological excavations are able to reveal the subtle connections that link burials across time and space and, more generally, the intricacies of Viking Age burial rituals. However, while more and more of these highly complex burial assemblages are being uncovered, archaeologists are presented with an archaeological record which does not fit easily into the ontological categories that have been adopted in the past, particularly in reference to some of the most basic analytical units which are becoming increasingly hard to define: What is a *burial*? Should an empty burial still be considered a burial? Do the partial remains of an individual, left behind after manipulation or removal, still represent a *person*? Do *bodies*

always signify *persons*? Do *bodies* always signify *burials*? Or do *persons* make *burials*? What is a *person*?

It is from this point, that I undertake the current research, which explores the relationship between burial practices, personhood, and the ontological status of different beings in the constitution of Viking Age persons.

Research Focus

This thesis examines the specific funerary practice of ‘multiple burial’ as it occurs across parts of Scandinavia and the Western Diaspora during the period AD 750–1050. Multiple burial is usually defined as the burial of two or more individuals within the same grave. However, as the example given above shows, there are many more spatial and temporal dimensions involved in the construction of Viking Age burials than our analytical categories allow. Therefore, the definition of multiple burial used in this thesis, detailed on page 17, extends to include the tangible and intangible ways people relate within these mortuary contexts.

Using a relational perspective, I explore how personhood was constituted through relationships between humans, animals and things in the multiple burial rite. This work aims to broaden our understanding of the ontological status of humans and non-humans during the Viking Age in relation to their treatment in burial contexts. To do this, the following research questions guided the course of this study:

1. *What is the nature of multiple burial in the Viking Age? Is its bipartite characterisation— as a deviant practice and a mode of family burial— borne out by the archaeological evidence?*

This aim stems from the need to situate multiple burial within the wider scope of burial practices observed across the Viking World. This involves challenging previously held views regarding the practice as a deviant funerary custom and establishing its relativity to other aspects of mortuary behaviour that recognise the continued interaction between— and comprehensive integration of —the world of the dead with the world of the living in Viking Age society.

2. *How is personhood constituted through the multiple burial rite?*

The second aim of this study derives from a conceptual framework of personhood, focusing on the sets of relationships formed between humans and their material worlds; that is, the relationships out of which persons emerge (Jones 2005:194). In this way, multiple burials are rich with relational possibilities, bringing together bodies, objects, materials and practices in entangled assemblages, providing fruitful ground for an exploration of the constitution of personhood.

3. *How do humans, animals and things relate in multiple burials? Is there the potential that some animals and things possessed personhood?*

This final research question, regarding the ontological status of people, animals and things, arises from a developing discourse in the Scandinavian tradition which is increasingly revealing the fluidity of 'being' in Iron Age myths and material culture. This work aims to build upon this theme using burial data to explore the broader concept of 'person' within Viking Age ontologies.

Scope of Study

In order to understand how personhood was constituted through the multiple burial of people, animals and things, the compilation of a comprehensive dataset

capturing attributes related to each of these components was essential. Prior to this research, no such multiple burial corpus existed for the Viking Age so a broad and inclusive survey was undertaken. The database combines data from two distinct regions: firstly, a Scandinavian sample of Viking Age burials from Norway and Denmark, and secondly, the burials located across the lands of the Western Diaspora. For the purposes of this study, those countries incorporated under the banner of the Western Diaspora include England (and the Isle of Man), Scotland, Ireland and Iceland. The decision to focus on this specific geographical spread was based on a number of factors. The Viking Age burial customs found across the Western Viking World show a great degree of regional diversity necessitating broad sampling to accurately represent mortuary trends. However, to produce a database of manageable proportions, and prioritise sub-corpora in which multiple burials are found, the Faroe Islands and Wales were not included in the database.

Another related matter concerned how best to sample the enormous corpus of Viking Age burials recorded in Scandinavia. Initially, the possibility of utilising Wamers (1985) corpus of burials containing Insular metalwork across Western Norway was explored to complement data from an urban Norwegian sample, however the level of detail required for the analysis of burial traits was not suitable for this study. To guarantee this detail, sites yielding large, well-documented cemeteries (on which comprehensive archaeological reports and publications were readily available) were selected. Meeting these criteria were the urban trading centres of Kaupang in Vestfold, Norway, and Hedeby, formerly of the Viking Age kingdom of Denmark, now situated in the Schleswig-Holstein district of modern-day Germany. Both of these sites were chosen because of their profound influence throughout the Western Viking World during this period, which may be comparable to Wamers' corpus in some respects.

There are limitations, of course, brought about by the use of such data. Firstly, it is recognised that Kaupang and Hedeby may not accurately represent the wider occurrence of multiple burial practices across Scandinavia, not least in that these sites are of a distinct urban nature, bringing with it the influences of cultural contact which may not be experienced in all areas of the Western Viking World. Moreover, it is acknowledged that the delineation and description of the corpus along the lines of modern geo-political boundaries is not accurately reflective of the Viking Age socio-political order; none of the nation states we recognise today were established during this period. Consequently, modern country names are used in the text as a means of breaking up the data to facilitate discussion. This is also true for the somewhat arbitrary bracketing of my analysis to the Viking Age; generally dating from AD 750 to 1050.

Finally, this thesis focuses on the multiple burial rite however, to adequately assess these burials as a distinct mortuary rite and a discrete unit of analysis for archaeological research, it was necessary to establish how it related to the nature of single burial. Thus, a burial catalogue was created which comprehensively compiled all records of confirmed and potential Viking Age graves of both ‘multiple’ and ‘single’ forms to facilitate comparison.

Research Materials and Methods

The broad dataset upon which this thesis is based is a composite of all Viking Age burials dating to between circa AD 750 to 1050 from Kaupang, Hedeby and the Western Diaspora (as defined in Appendix 1). The corpus comprises 91 multiple burials, found amongst a further 2107 single burials, that are distributed across 350 Viking Age burial sites (Appendix 4). Records of the total

2198 burials were extracted from published regional burial catalogues, antiquarian journals and site-specific excavation reports.

Data Collection

Burials were included in this research on the basis of their fulfilment of two selection criteria:

- Firstly, deposits must have been previously interpreted as human burials of a funerary nature (distinct from ritual or votive deposits that may have other motivating factors, see Appendix 1). In the absence of either skeletal material or identifiable burial structures, the identification of other features that reasonably suggest the deposit was originally formed as a burial were taken into consideration.
- Secondly, burials must have been interpreted as ‘Scandinavian’ in character, a definition which encompasses furnished burials containing artefacts of late eighth to eleventh century date, which are comparable to those found across the rest of the Viking World. Unfurnished burials were included on the basis of absolute-dated skeletal material and other contextual evidence— i.e. relative dating through stratigraphy— that support a Viking Age date.

In no way should the second criterion be considered unproblematic, incorporating, as it does, a fair degree of over-simplification through which the individual specificities of political, ethnic, religious and cultural identities— all intersectional and held in delicate tension at any one time— are indistinguishably ironed smooth. Most importantly, we must recognise that many of those individuals buried in such circumstances may not have identified as Scandinavian, or Hiberno-/Anglo-Scandinavian at all, nor should we assume that objects of Scandinavian stylistic influence are indiscriminately representative of

an individual's political, ethnic, religious or cultural identity. Indeed, the sheer diversity of burial practices observed across Scandinavia and the lands to which Scandinavians emigrated '*en masse*' from the eighth century onwards has been used by some to dismantle the idea of a pan-Scandinavian 'Viking Age' culture (Svanberg 2003). However, I follow Price (2012:259) and Harrison and Ó Floinn (2014), who view the consistently shared traits observed in material culture and burials— not strictly defined by, but on the whole generally characterised by—the criterion outlined above.

The collection of the burial data proved to be a complex and difficult undertaking. This was due to the antiquarian nature of many of the early records for the Western Diaspora which were not professionally excavated. Many of these burials were discovered during infrastructure development projects or during the informal investigations of farmland by tenant-farmers over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth century. The reports pertaining to these discoveries are often incomplete, anecdotal and, in many cases, contradictory. The diverse nature of the sources used to collate the dataset meant that obtaining data in relation to all of the targeted burial attributes was challenging and, in many cases, impossible. Burial records of an incomplete nature have been included on the basis of the quality of their extant data.

Burials for which adequate information existed were entered into relational database tables, each pertaining to a singular category of inquiry. Tables containing information on the deceased included such attributes as the sex/gender and age of individuals, the rite type used (cremation or inhumation), body orientation, body positioning, as well as evidence of pathology, trauma and bodily treatment. The table containing the zoological evidence included attributes relating to the type of animal remains found, their treatment, the

whole or partial condition of the remains, and where they were placed in relation to the human deceased. Similar attributes were collected for the table pertaining to objects that appeared to have been ceremonially modified. A more detailed outline of these categories and the structure of the relational database can be found in Appendix 2.

A Relational Approach

Working with such a varied dataset— demonstrating considerable diversity at both the broadest and most specific of scales— called for an agile methodology in which a broad scale quantitative approach was held in tension with a fine-detailed qualitative inquiry. With the aim of situating multiple burial within the wider scope of burial practices observed across the Viking World, a structured, quantitative analysis of burial attributes was needed to observe variability between single and multiple burials and to ensure comparability with studies focused on other mortuary customs.

In this manner, the occurrence of a number of widely used attributes (i.e. sex/gender and age) were internally compared, providing insights into the relationship between different phenomena across various material, spatial and temporal scales in each context. For example, one such query aimed to understand how the intersection of space and time was articulated through the relational placement of graves within a multiple burial. In the process, a number of aspects were considered in relation to one another; the use of a single or multiple context, the manipulation of space along horizontal and/or vertical planes, and the temporal setting of the multiple burial in question. This approach helped to probe the relationships formed between the interred individuals and their status in relation to the living.

While it was profitable to assign broad, generalising classifications to particular phenomena to meet the first aim of this research, it became clear that much of the fantastic complexity of multiple burials would be lost without a naturalistic and qualitative engagement with the subtleties of their formation. Moreover, it was only through an unstructured, holistic and context-sensitive process that the second and third aims of the research could be achieved. Fundamental to this was the adoption of a principle of relationality, seated within the 'ontological turn'. Such a position requires a loosening of one's own ontological categories so that interpretation is based solely on what is *found*, rather than what is *expected* to be found. An ontological methodology "is not about deconstruction of general concepts, but about reconstruction— an empirical perspective that is open to other ways of categorising the world" (Fahlander 2016:141; see also Holbraad and Pedersen 2017).

One such means of accessing alternate ontological categorisations is to approach the material with a focus on relationality. The basis of a relational approach stems from the position that all matter is ontologically relational and inherently indeterminable (Alberti & Marshall 2009:345). Relationality, then, is a broad suite of approaches which conflates 'the abstract and immutable dualities of modernist ontologies' by focusing on the relationships that form between entities— it is 'the linkages rather than the nodes' that are imperative in understanding how various entities emerge and evolve together (Watt 2013:1). Relationality also encompasses an inherent symmetry between things, where the agency of one phenomenon is not privileged over that of another. This symmetry allowed for a full exploration of the ways in which the relations between people, animals and things constituted personhood through multiple burial, and enabled

me to fully engage with the current discourse on the ontological status of animals and things in Viking Age mentalities.

Further discussion relating specific components of the research with the theoretical paradigms of relevance are situated at the outset of each of the core chapters (Chapters Four through Six). Specifically, in Chapter Four, I draw upon Fowler's (2004, 2016) work on personhood, which focuses on how the category of 'person' takes shape through a person's relationship with others and the world around them, and how personhood is informed by embodied experience, as put forth by Csordas (1990, 1994). In Chapter Five, I extend this discussion to the animal data, building upon Hedeager's (2010, 2011) seminal works regarding the construction of persons in animal and human bodies within Iron Age ontologies, by exploring the pervasive potential of animal personhood in burial contexts. Finally, in Chapter Six, I engage with aspects of embodied personhood further by exploring the role of ceremonial object modification in relation to metaphors of the body, using Chapman's (2000) theories on fragmentation to reframe the practice and construction of object persons.

Definitions and Challenges

Multiple burials can generally be defined as the presence of more than one individual in a grave. The practice of burying several individuals in the same context is not an uncommon occurrence in the Viking Age and, although it appears in relatively low frequencies compared with other perceived 'normative' customs, graves of this nature persist in the archaeological record of the Viking World. Despite this, they have not been the focus of specific enquiry and few have attempted to understand their physical nature or social and ritual significance. As a consequence, the terms we use to describe the various forms of multiple burial are restrictive, despite a growing number of terms being cited

in the literature. This requires resolution before this practice can be assessed as a whole.

In general, there are many terms that are used to describe the burial of more than one individual, however how and why they are deployed by authors discussing this phenomenon are often not acknowledged, obscuring how their studies can contribute to the wider discussion of collective burial practices. Particularly, the region within which the archaeological study is undertaken influences the choice of one term over another, further complicating the matter. Sprague (2005) has attempted to standardise classifications of burial practices across differing academic traditions on a regional basis. Of importance to this study, Sprague's classificatory criterion of 'Individuality' deals with the number of human individuals involved in a specific container or pit (2005:73). In his comprehensive survey of terms used to describe this aspect of burial, he has encountered the following nomenclature: fragmentary or partial burial, single-, double-, twin- and multiple burial, along with other less frequently used terms such as plural-, mixed-, embracing-, communal-, mass-, pattern-, ossuary-, group-, compound- and collective burial (Sprague 2005:73–74). He suggests that the appropriate term to describe the burial of more than one person together should be, in the first instance when only two individuals are interred together, a 'double burial'. He suggests 'multiple burial' should be used in the case of more than two individuals being interred together, with an emphasis on the articulation of those bodies, while 'mass burial' should be used in the case of disarticulated remains, no matter how few people are involved.

Although there is much value in Sprague's approach, bringing a degree of clarity to a varied nomenclature, I query the need to distinguish between burials on the basis of the number of individuals they contain or the state of their articulation.

Particularly, distinguishing between 'double' burials and 'multiple burials' seems to suggest that there is an ontological difference between the two, as if the nature of the relationships in each context differ. I would argue that the interment of one individual with another should be considered the lowest common dominator, regardless of how many individuals are represented.

Sprague's conception of a mass burial has been opposed by Knüsel (2014:44), who states that disarticulation need not be an indicator of a mass burial, and subsequently views them as part of the multiple burial rite, being special but simultaneously of an essentially similar character. Alternatively, Skinner (1987:268) views the two phenomena as separate practices based on the indiscriminate and irreverent manner with which bones are deposited in mass burials. I am inclined to agree with Skinner, but not on the grounds of any perceived irreverence. Some multiple burials within the present corpus exhibit seemingly little care in the manner of their interment but cannot reasonably be defined as mass burials because, in some cases, they only contain two people. Rather mass burials need to be defined on the basis of a number of different characteristics as advocated by Knüsel (2014:44); an apparent organisational disorder (outside the bounds of normative practice), multiple bodies in contact with each other, and evidence of peri-mortem traumatic injuries of a nature commonly observed across the deposit, amongst others.

Three mass burials were initially included in the present study; St John's Oxford burial containing 35 males aged between 16 and 25 years, the 54 decapitated men (of similar ages as St John's) found at Ridgeway Hill in Dorset, and the 264 individuals, both men and women, interred in the charnel deposit at Repton. However, upon reflection it seemed better to exclude these burials in the present analysis due to their different nature compared to the rest of the multiple burial

corpus. The present corpus only contains burials which appear to be the product of careful funerary practice.

The suggestion has been made that multiple burials may have been motivated by expedience— specifically because it is easier to dig a slightly larger earth cut than two standard-size separate cuts when there are multiple deceased that need to be interred— however this has been roundly dismissed by scholars as a motivating factor in other cultural contexts (e.g. Stoodley 2002). Although I agree that mass burials should be considered as an aspect of multiple burial, their use seems to incorporate a degree of expedience, more akin to a mode of disposal, which differs from most other multiple burials that appear carefully planned and occur within a more formal funerary sphere. For example, had the mass burial of Salme II, located on the Estonian island of Saaremaa, fallen within the geographical bounds of this research, it would have been included as a multiple burial as the positioning of those interred referenced a considerable degree of funerary formality (Price *et al.* 2016).

Duday (2006, 2008; 2009) has not put as much emphasis on number of individuals in his conception of the multiple burial. As a key contributor to the development of archaeothanatological theory, Duday has published extensively on the issues relating to multiple burial, and advocates for a separation between the terms 'collective burial' and 'multiple burial'. In his view, a multiple burial denotes the simultaneous deposition of multiple bodies, a definition which also encompasses mass graves. Conversely, Duday's 'collective burial' refers to two practices distinguished on the basis of disturbance. The term 'successive inhumation' describes the deposition of consecutive burials in the same burial context over time, while 'reductions of the corpse' refers to collective burials which have been reduced by disarticulation and manipulation during deposition

of successive inhumations through re-use of the same feature (Duday 2008). Consequently, Duday's categorisation of various forms of multiple burial hinges upon various states of articulation.

It is understandable that, from an archaeothanatological perspective, articulation would form a central concern, and this may be appropriate for the mortuary behaviour of some cultures not of focus in this research. However, a growing literature is exploring the use of bodies— parts and wholes— as a medium through which relationships are established and socio-ritual meanings are materialised in the Late Iron Age (see Back Danielsson 2007; Hedeager 2010; Shapland and Armit 2012; Lund 2013; Fahlander 2016; and more broadly within the discipline Brück 1995, 2006a; Fahlander 2003; Harper 2010; Sørensen 2010). These studies contest the assumed connection between individuality, the status of 'persons' and bodily integrity. In this vein, I am of the opinion that instituting a distinction between multiple burials on the basis of bodily articulation is of limited value.

Another set of terms often used to discuss the relationship between individuals within multiple burials are the words 'primary' and 'secondary'. Sprague has attempted to clarify the use of these terms in his classificatory criterion of 'Form of Disposal', in which he illustrates how these two words hold a range of vastly different meanings for many archaeologists. In Britain, this is usually taken to denote the sequence of deposition, where the primary burial is the one for which a monument was made and a secondary burial is a later addition, sometimes called satellite burials. This of course comes with the presupposition that the primary burial is the person of high social rank while the secondary or satellite burials are of lesser importance. In North America, the terms are used to describe the completeness of the remains, where 'primary' suggests articulated,

in-situ remains and ‘secondary’ suggests disarticulated, disturbed remains. Closely related to this paradigm is another use of ‘secondary’ related to the funerary process, in the sense that the disarticulated nature of the remains suggest that the body was first stored or buried elsewhere and the burial that is excavated represents their secondary interment (Sprague 2005:66–70).

In terms of classification, early medieval multiple burials have traditionally been understood to exist in two basic forms: either vertically stacked burials where one individual is placed on top of another or the horizontal burial of two or more individuals’ side by side. In this framework, while both chronological and spatial factors are considered, emphasis is placed on the timeliness of burial, the simultaneous or relatively short subsequent burial of individuals, or the relational positioning of individuals, whether closely interred above or beside each other. However, there are numerous instances of burials that are clearly related, like Litlu-Núpar, which have not been considered ‘multiple’ due to observations of a longer time lapse or larger distances between interments. This means that the nature of the multiple burial rite has been assessed on the basis of very restrictive chronological and spatial categories that result in a less-than-complete dataset. This is not the case for multiple burials of the Neolithic or Bronze Age periods (see Mizoguchi 1993 for a seminal example), whose interpretation has incorporated a much longer-term view of collective burial, thereby encouraging a broader understanding of personhood and identity functioning at both individual and societal levels, respectively.

These different definitions have made accessing comparative literature for this study very difficult. For clarity, the terms used in this research will avoid such confusions by using ‘initial’ and ‘subsequent’ to refer to the order in which individuals were interred. Where the burial sequence is unknown, this will be

made clear in the text. Where skeletal remains are thought to have been exhumed and reburied, the term 'redeposited', rather than 'secondary', will be used. Furthermore, it is my opinion that the practice of interring more than one individual in the same burial structure should not be categorised on the basis of the minimum number of individuals, nor should the degree of articulation of their remains have any bearing on whether a burial is described as a multiple burial or mass grave. Therefore, 'multiple burial' in this work is used to describe any burial in which:

- *More than one person is deposited in either a whole or partial state*
- *Being either of an articulated or disarticulated nature*
- *Demonstrating that all remains were intentionally interred*
- *In deposits which have a distinct funerary nature (as opposed to ritual deposits, see Appendix 1 for further detail)*
- *Within or across contexts and structures that appear intentionally linked by tangible or intangible means*

In this manner, multiple burials could take the form of individuals buried in the:

- *Same context, i.e. the same earth cut or coffin*
- *Same structure, i.e. in separate earth cuts within a single mound, separate coffins within the same earth cut, or separate earth cuts covered by a single stone setting*
- *Different structures that are contextually linked via tangible structures, i.e. separate graves connected by above ground wooden platforms or causeways, or intangible structures, i.e. separate burial of an individual in an earth cut, over which a subsequent burial is made referencing the same placement and orientation of the original burial, without reusing the same cut.*

The temporal dimensions of these burials are just as important as their spatial components and have been included solely on the intentional connection between one burial and another, at whatever time they occurred. Previously, emphasis has been placed on the contemporaneous burial of individuals that are the outcome of a single funerary event. However, if we focus only on the relational aspect of these burials then the following temporal forms must be included:

- *Contemporary multiple burials containing individuals who were interred during the same funeral event (keeping in mind that some burial rituals took a number of days to complete).*
- *Consecutive multiple burials containing individuals who were not buried during the same funeral event. These burials may be added to existing Viking Age burials over the course of years, decades and even centuries. However, all interments must take place within the Viking Age (circa AD 750 to 1050).*
- *Antecedent multiple burials containing at least one individual who lived during the Viking Age interred within or in direct relation to an existing prehistoric burial. These burials often date to or before the Bronze Age. These burials are often researched as a separate form of funerary behaviour called 're-use'.*

I acknowledge that the inclusivity of such an approach may appear radical, in that it challenges the familiar burial categories with which we have worked in our professional lives as archaeologists. Using such an all-encompassing classification system has resulted in a corpus of burials that employ diverse spatial and temporal strategies to articulate relationships, beyond what traditional views of the practice would usually accept. In fact, one may ask; at what point does a multiple burial end and a cemetery begin? One could argue that all burials deposited within a cemetery were intentionally placed in the same localised area, making reference to a shared relationship between the deceased. If so, could this not also be taken as a multiple burial? Depending on the criteria

one chooses to use and the scale at which the study takes place, this scenario certainly could be true.

Research conducted using such a perspective may serve as a valuable approach in testing the physical and ontological parameters we use to define burial phenomena into categories. However, while my research is focused on exploring the physical and ontological boundaries of persons and burials, I still wish to examine one particular practice and its relevance amongst a wider suite of mortuary customs, rather than investigate burial traditions at their broadest scale. Accordingly, I have not abandoned all delimitations, but have instead considered burials that demonstrate *clear and intentional relational strategies* which fall at the midpoint of a relational scale concerned, at one end, with the relations between phenomena within a single grave and, at the other, the broadest relations of entire burial corpora.

My analysis resides in the middle ground between these two extremes, at a point from which the diversity of the temporal and spatial scales used in multiple burials— beyond the usual foci of contemporaneity and single context use— can be acknowledged. This methodology has allowed me to investigate these burials based solely on their purposeful inclusion of more than one individual in specific relation to another, however that should manifest itself. In this manner, I argue that we can more fully recognise the immense diversity of multiple burial forms as they exist, without the preconceptions which artificially narrow our field of view.

Limitations

In any study of the past, it is critical to be aware of the cultural biases we bring to the data. I have attempted to construct a methodology which attempts to

avoid the constraints of traditional archaeological categories to enable a view of the data as 'inherently indeterminable' in line with a relational approach. That said, archaeological studies must be situated within a wider academic discourse which is itself subject to categories, so I have tried to find a happy medium between these two imperatives, a project I am sure I do not completely achieve at all times.

A related issue is the use of pre-existing data. No new burials were excavated in the process of this research and so the nature of the data has had to be accepted as it came. Some of the earliest antiquarian reports from which data was extracted were published in the late eighteenth century. The collection of data in these circumstances was surely influenced by contemporary historical, political and cultural understandings of the time, as well as the personal interests of those conducting the investigations. This is also true of the data produced by more modern archaeological excavations, which will have been conducted in their own theoretical, political and economic constraints. In this way, the data collected in this study is embedded with three hundred years of ideas about the past, which may not do justice to the material as it was originally made.

Thesis Structure

In this chapter, I have introduced the central focus of this thesis, which is the multiple burial rite, and presented some denotational, methodological and interpretive issues that have prompted my inquiry. I have also outlined the research questions driving the project, delineated the temporal and geographical scope of the study, and specified the basis of my relational approach to the data at hand.

In Chapter Two, *The Ordinary and the Other*, I critique how multiple burial has previously been explored within an oppositional framework of Ordinary/Other and suggest an alternative approach grounded firmly within current discourses on relationality, ontology and personhood.

In Chapter Three, *Multiple Burial across the Western Viking World*, I present the results relating to the material, spatial and temporal construction of these burials, that establishes their nature beyond frameworks of deviancy and family, situating the practice within a broader suite of other burial customs observed across the Viking World. I conclude with some thoughts on how we may explore the production of personhood in these unique burials.

Chapter Four, *The Production of Persons in Multiple Burial*, begins with a brief review of the concept of personhood and its development in archaeological discourse to create a framework through which we can observe the many ways human bodies were used and produced through aspects of the multiple burial rite. Following this, I explore how the research expands upon the conceptual categories of 'being' currently debated in Late Iron Age contexts and show how a relational approach focused on personhood can expand our understanding of this unique practice and its role in constituting 'persons' of all forms.

In Chapter Five, *Animal–Human Burials*, I explore the manner in which animals were treated and deposited within Viking Age burials and suggest some possible interpretations as to how personhood was constructed through co-burial with humans in these contexts. I conclude with a consideration of the ontological status of some animals as revealed through the modes of their deposition in line with the findings of this chapter.

Chapter Six, *Thing–Human Burials*, considers the role of specially treated objects, namely weapons which have undergone ceremonial modification, to explore the modes through which their material forms were altered through the practice, and the manner in which these unique items were deposited with humans in burials. In keeping with the discussion of human and animal personhood in the preceding chapters, I offer some thoughts on the role ceremonially modified weapons play in the constitution of personhood and the potential that some of these weapons may have been considered as persons in Viking Age minds.

The discussion section of this thesis presented in Chapter Seven, *The Other Body*, builds upon the results presented in the previous three chapters to consider holistically how personhood ‘not of one shape’ was produced through burial practices in the Viking Age. I synthesise how modes of embodied being were created through the temporal and spatial dimensions of the multiple burial rite and present my final argument regarding the extension of multiple burial theory to consider ‘other bodies’ as relational persons.

To finish, I offer my *Final Thoughts* in Chapter Eight, wherein I summarise the key conclusions of this research, the theoretical and methodological implications it holds for the study of Viking Age burial practices and chart some future research directions in light of the outcomes of this study.

The Ordinary and the Other

Multiple Burial in the Research Landscape

In the preceding chapter, I highlighted that the spatial, temporal and material complexities that are increasingly being identified in the Viking Age mortuary record necessitate a reappraisal of both the burial data and the ontological categories that underpin our understanding of this evidence. I also showed how an approach grounded in relationality can build upon recent scholarly work focused on Viking Age ontologies which recognise the role of this complexity in producing social relations and persons in the Viking Age. The focus of this chapter is to examine previous archaeological considerations of the multiple burial which have given rise to the major interpretive models that have dominated the discourse to date. I will begin by reviewing how multiple burial has been considered in the Scandinavian tradition with respect to two major themes— the 'ordinary' family and the social 'other'. While each theme has served as a stepping stone towards understanding the types of identities that may have made up Viking Age society, a relational perspective may further open up how these identities emerged, intersecting and transforming Viking Age persons through the multiple burial rite.

Viking Age Multiple Burials

Burial practices during the Viking Age were greatly diverse and, despite a wealth of well-excavated burials having been documented over the last century, there is no clear, common orthodoxy that can be said to characterise Norse mortuary

behaviour (Price 2012:257). In fact, perhaps the defining feature of Viking funerary custom was its fundamental diversity across Scandinavia and the lands to which they emigrated. The great number of practices observed, and the diverse manner in which they were carried out, has resulted in similarly numerous and diverse interpretative approaches focused on specific phenomena within the mortuary record; boat burials, prehistoric monument re-use, or the occurrence of specific grave goods, to name just a few. Consequently, theorising on the role of particular practices like multiple burial— a rite which cuts across many of these different phenomena— is particularly challenging.

There is no single text or volume which deals specifically with the multiple burial rite in the Viking Age, and some burials which contain the remains of more than one individual have not been explored, or even classified, specifically as 'multiple burials'. In these contexts, the multiplicity of individuals seems only important in so far as they reinforce assumptions about the nature of Viking Age social order. Common queries in this vein ponder *from what social strata are a husband and wife afforded a ship burial in the Viking Age* and *what rank of person is given a slave to serve them in the afterlife?* In fact, in order to survey the nature of multiple burial for the purposes of this study, examples had to be sifted out from discussions regarding related aspects of Viking Age society; the social status of women and children, the prevalence of slavery and human sacrifice, judicial conventions and criminality, and the performance of ritual magic by its practitioners.

The distinction between whether or not a burial complex is deemed a 'multiple burial' does not seem to be based upon the number of individuals contained within, but on their interpreted nature as being either 'mundane' or 'spectacular', a classification usually based on the comparative wealth of furnishings or distinctive treatment of the dead in these contexts. For example,

the famous Oseberg ship burial is not specifically described as a multiple burial; some authors simply describe that it contained two individuals (Brøgger 1945; Sjøvold 1985; Arwill-Nordbladh 2003; Holck 2006; Nordeide 2011; Bill 2016), while others only discuss ‘the Oseberg queen’ (Ingstad 1995) and make no mention of the other individual. Some even assert the possibility of three individuals having been interred in the ship, all the while without classifying it a multiple burial (Androshchuk 2005). In fact, only two papers of the many surveyed referred to the find as a ‘double burial’; one, a consideration of ship burials and the beliefs that produced them, published just twenty years after the discovery of Oseberg (Major 1924), and the other, a master’s thesis from the University of Oslo published almost 90 years later (Ruffoni 2011). With no small degree of prescience, Major opens his discussion with the observation, “old ideas are difficult to uproot” (1924:113).

In a summary of the Viking Age burials on the Isle of Man, Wilson makes very clear that there is a distinction when talking about multiple burials:

“The most interesting feature of the Ballateare burial is the element of sacrificial offering, most strikingly shown by the woman who was almost certainly killed in order to accompany the dead man into the afterlife... One may assume, as was the case on the Volga, that the Ballateare woman was a slave, valued on the same scale as the animals which had clearly been burnt as an offering... It must be stressed that many ordinary double burials — graves containing both men and women — are simply that (husband and wife, for example), and provide evidence neither of suttee nor of sacrificed slaves.”

(Wilson 2008:32–34)

And so, an ontological division has been created in regard to multiple burials so that some factor into the corpus while others, especially the magnificent examples like the Oseberg ship burial, do not. Wilson’s observation encapsulates perfectly how the wider discourse surrounding multiple burial has created a

polarity between the *Ordinary* (husbands and wives, parents and children) and the *Other* (slaves, criminals, outcasts, foreigners, sorcerers and— specifically in the case of Wilson's comment— animals). The origin of this dichotomy is difficult to ascertain, although one possible candidate is the article published by Shetelig in 1910, which traces the custom of suttee throughout Norwegian prehistory. It has proven exceptionally influential, being cited in almost all works exploring various aspects of the multiple burial rite.

Through his survey of multiple burial, Shetelig observed that it was not until the Viking Age that the frequency of the co-burial of males and females increased to a level that far exceeded numbers explained simply by coincidental death. Instead, he thought they must be explained in relation to wider mortuary trends. One such practice he considered causative of the sharp increase in multiple burial was that of suttee— the forced or voluntary killing of a widow to accompany her husband in death.

According to Shetelig, suttee may be identified if a man and woman were found to be buried at the same time and were of the same social rank, as verified by their respective grave good assemblages. If the grave goods were not bestowed in equal measure, Shetelig considered these burials to be examples of masters interred with their slaves, while those containing two males may be attributed to the institution of foster-brotherhood (Shetelig 1910:184,187). Although Shetelig's proposed evidence of suttee is fragmented and problematic, this line of investigation proved the source of another, more convincing argument, where the development of suttee (and subsequently the intensified use of the multiple burial) grew as a complimentary practice in line with an overall escalation of the rate of grave good deposition across Norway in the later eighth century (Shetelig 1910:195).

Shetelig does not offer an opinion as to the differential treatment of these individuals, perhaps because the Norwegian burials rarely contain sufficiently preserved skeletal material from which to identify treatment in death. The absence of such commentary is illuminating. As we will come to see, the Norwegian literature has not played as great a role in the development of the Ordinary/Other discourse as compared to those of the Danish and Swedish tradition, possibly because of the reduced ability to identify skeletal 'maltreatment' in the archaeological record. However, after Shetelig's seminal paper, the discourse became greatly influenced by the Swedish and Danish material, in which a number of burials exhibiting 'unusual' bodily treatment were recovered. In response, early scholarly works were increasingly concerned with the identification of 'disrespectful' mortuary treatment and the physical mechanics of *othering* displayed in multiple burials, with little attention being given to exploring other aspects of this complex mortuary rite.

Throughout the rest of this chapter, I examine whether the duality of the Ordinary/Other is supported in the multiple burial evidence, by considering the dominant interpretive models applied to the corpus— familial kinship (the Ordinary) and human sacrifice and deviancy (the Other). The following subsections of this chapter explore these themes separately in greater detail, although it will become clear that many of the concepts are interrelated and feature in a number of the same studies. Firstly, let us consider how multiple burials have been explored in relation to the family unit.

The Ordinary: Family and Kinship

Although multiple burials are widely interpreted as 'family' burials, remarkably little attention has been paid to testing whether this is firstly, borne out by the

skeletal evidence, or secondly (and more importantly), whether this is a valid concept to apply to the burial record at all. A substantial number of studies have accepted, with little scrutiny, the premise that the nuclear and/or extended family was so fundamental to Viking Age social structure that it was purposefully made manifest in multiple burials. Moreover, many authors use the terms 'family' (the most common) and 'kinship' interchangeably without stipulating what they mean by either (Yanagisako 1979). When scholars suggest these multiple burials might consist of families, do they mean nuclear families stemming from the belief that the concept of family is universal and therefore self-explanatory? Alternatively, when they suggest more vaguely that those interred together are kin, is their assessment based upon a biological understanding of kinship, or do they use a looser conception of social kinship more akin to Sahlins' (2011) 'mutuality of being'?

These terms and concepts must first be clarified and explored if the concept of kinship, in any form, is to be evaluated for its representation in the mortuary arena. The following section considers how kinship— here discussed in three forms (nuclear, biological and social)— may have been defined in Viking Age society, in order to assess whether the concept holds any value in the exploration of multiple burial.

Family

Family is a fundamental human institution. For many, it forms the basic social unit upon which society is built and is a shared element of all human life. However, how one conceptualises their own relatedness with others is not universal, and any analysis of kinship must be robustly rooted in the specific cultural and temporal context in which it is observed (Yanagisako 1979; Johnson and Paul 2016:75). At the same time though, households within a particular

society may differ greatly from each other; they may carry out the same tasks in the same physical and social worlds, but they will not all follow the same strategy to do so, nor will the character of their relationships within this process be the same (Hendon 2002:48). Add to these the biological and socio-economic constraints that effect the compositional form of a family and it becomes even more challenging to gain an understanding of just how a ‘family’ was constructed in the past. For this reason, textual and archaeological evidence of the composition and relational dynamics of Viking Age households can be both contradictory and ambiguous.

Literary and historical texts referring to Old Norse burial practices present a picture of Viking Age Scandinavia in which it was common for family members to be buried together. A common practice related in these sources is the interment of wives (either alive or dead) with their deceased husbands, as narrated in a number of sagas including *The Short Song of Sigurd* (Orchard 2013) and *The Saga of Olaf Tryggvason* (Andersson 2003). Ethnographies collected by chroniclers like Ibn Rustah, an Arab traveller who encountered a group of Scandinavians in Russia circa AD 922, also attest to such customs (Foote and Wilson 1980:412). Other kin relations also figure into this picture; in *Gesta Danorum*, Saxo Grammaticus recounts the story of Asmund who sacrificed himself to join his foster-brother Asvik in death (Friis-Jensen & Fisher 2015). However, do these stories capture the realities of family life and kinship as it was experienced in Viking Age society?

There have been various methodological approaches to the study of Viking Age households. Some have explored this aspect of life through analysing the spatial structure of domestic architecture, while others have used palaeodemographic calculations based on the osteological data from cemetery populations. Although

it may feel like a rather sterile approach to a very human concept, demographic estimations can provide a preliminary insight into how a family may have been composed in the past. One such study, carried out by Benedictow (1996), used osteological data from Viking Age contexts across Scandinavia to calculate nuclear family size. His analysis found that two partners in the Viking Age would raise an average of 2.25 children who lived to reach adult age (Benedictow 1996:174). However, as Benedictow points out, the high adult mortality rates experienced by Iron Age and early medieval Scandinavian societies, suggested by osteological calculations based on contemporaneous cemetery populations (e.g. Boldsen 1984; Holck 1987; Sellevold *et al.* 1984; Welinder 2001; Zoëga & Murphy 2016), would mean that the average family would likely have cared for approximately 0.75 offspring from the previous marriages of either one or both spouses (Benedictow 1996:174). In this way, high mortality rates may have created blended households accommodating children from multiple marriages and of varying degrees of biological relation. In fact, Benedictow has suggested that almost one-third of all offspring would have had a step-parent in the Viking Age, while a small but significant proportion would have been orphaned and taken care of by other non-parental families (2003:245, Tab. 9.3). This evidence presents a picture of Viking Age households as much more complex and extensive than a simple nuclear family, which calls in to question the concept's relevance in the burial evidence.

Biological and Affinal Kinship

Even if the concept of a nuclear family played a lesser role in the organisation of Viking Age society, this does not exclude the possibility that kinship more generally was a structuring concept in the mortuary sphere. First though, we must understand how kinship was defined. A range of evidence suggests that a number of social, economic and political conventions all served to structure

kinship during this period. In a legal sense, texts from Norway and Iceland indicate that kinship was delimited to the third degree— a kin group (ON *ætt*) encompassed an individual, their immediate family, their offspring, the offspring of their siblings, their maternal and paternal grandparents, and their cousins, aunts, and uncles (Sigurðsson 2017:104). Kinship was predominantly bilateral, meaning that only siblings from the same parents shared the same kin group, while their parents' and future offspring's kin groups would have differed from their own significantly (Sigurðsson 2017:104).

At the same time, the operation of a patrilineal system of inheritance meant that sons, whether legitimate or not, took precedence over other family members (Sigurðsson 2017:104; but see Sawyer 1992:28). Inheritance was an important issue for kin groups and the socio-political negotiations involved may have formed a real threat to a family's sense of cohesion, particularly so if households were made up of blended families through remarriage, adoption and fostering. But, Viking Age kinship was further complicated by the widespread practice of polygyny and concubinage— a semi-formal relationship in which individuals (usually men) engaged in sexual and (sometimes) co-habital relationships with individuals outside of marriage to establish political ties and gain greater power through their joint social networks (Magnúsdóttir 2012:44; Raffield et al. 2017:169). Because the offspring of these unions could also be legally recognised alongside any legitimate children (Karras 1990:144; Roesdahl 2016:64), households would have been composed of numerous, differentially related offspring forming several constellations of kin groups within families. Magnúsdóttir (2012:42) suggests that this may have led to conflicts in loyalty within families, and it is hard to see how this would have been avoided; we can never know how extramarital relations were perceived by spouses, although one

might assume that if it jeopardised their own political and economic security, or that of their children, it must have seriously eroded the fabric of kin ties.

Christiansen has captured the internal discordance of *ætt* in his description of the institution; for him, *ætt* was ‘a complex structure based upon more or less contradictory principles— descent in the male line, descent in the female line, allies by marriage and the ‘ego-focus’ of the defining member’ (2006:47–48). While kinship relations may have been fraught in private, the public projection of a strong kin group was a powerful social tool. A recent study of the nature of various kin ties in negotiating family feuds in Iceland by Palmstierna and colleagues (2017) has shown that the composition of one’s kin group and the degree of relatedness that exists between individuals was a decisive factor for families considering engaging in revenge killings. In general, the data shows that killers had significantly more kin than their victims and, of the 153 victims recorded, none were related to their killer closer than the level of cousin. Conversely, foster kin were much more likely to be killed than biological or affinal kin (Palmstierna *et al.* 2017:177). Furthermore, in approximately three quarters of all incidences, the killer had significantly more kin (of all kinds) than that of the victim (Palmstierna *et al.* 2017:178). The fact that affinal and biological kin were similarly spared from such actions suggests that in-laws were as relevant to an individual’s decision-making as their biological kin, perhaps due to their shared interest in the success of the next generation (Palmstierna *et al.* 2017:179). In sum, Palmstierna and colleagues propose that feuds arose out of competition for scarce arable land, and individuals with less kin were targeted because their land could be won with minimal cost and little chance of retaliation (2017:179).

Not only was kinship an important concept in acquiring new land but it was also fundamental to the consolidation of ancestral land. Many scholars have suggested that the primary and uniting function of *ætt* was to honour and defend the family's *óðal*— the inherited landed property of a family passed down through the male line of ancestors (Gurevich 1985:45; Zachrisson 1994:219; Christiansen 2006:48). As Pedersen emphasises, a predominantly oral society would need to use visual strategies, to assert their family line and communicate their place within the community to others (2006:351). Therefore, kinship was inextricably linked with burial practices as one such method of materialising lineages.

A number of studies focusing on burial re-use support the practice's connection with ancestral legitimation and *óðal* claims (Zachrisson 1994, 2017; Hållans Stenholm 2006, 2012; Thäte 2007; Leonard 2011). Hållans Stenholm notes that the ubiquity of Viking Age burial re-use evident across the Mälär Valley in Sweden suggests that the practice must have been a means of expressing cultural ties with certain historical individuals associated with ancient farmsteads (2012:244). She observed that cemetery re-use was often concentrated on burial places that demonstrated a considerable temporal depth which, when considered alongside a marked increase in burial re-use evident in the tenth century, could be read as a response to a growing feeling that claims to ancient farmsteads were under threat (Hållans Stenholm 2012).

Sawyer (1992) has made a similar argument for the corpus of runestones distributed across the Scandinavian (and British) landscape. She notes that the inscriptions made by family members in memorial of deceased kin were produced in times of political and religious transition, with their frequency increasing significantly when political power shifted from being indirectly held

by local rulers to direct and centralised royal control in the tenth century (Sawyer 1992:6–7).

Most recently, Zachrisson (2017) has interpreted the shift towards the construction and re-use of highly visible burial monuments in Sweden as a direct consequence of the crisis in land ownership that occurred much earlier in the sixth century. She asserts that the 'long winter' climate event¹ may have precipitated large-scale abandonment of farms which needed to be reclaimed in the years following the incident. Consequently, the increased emphasis on the establishment of a family's *óðal* rights saw a change in burial practices in which multiple burials constructed through re-use were a means through which property claims could be reasserted and the succession of *óðal* land could be secured (Zachrisson 2017:127).

Her work also demonstrates that burial construction and re-use was a strategy not restricted to Scandinavia but can be seen across the lands of the Western Diaspora. Zachrisson notes that the construction of burial mounds during the first century of settlement in Iceland (outlined in *Landnámabók*) linked land ownership with ancestors, a part of which meant that burial mounds were placed at farm boundaries. These burial mounds were assigned either real or invented ancestors, a custom that was also practiced in Britain. The pre-existing burial mounds of England were given Scandinavian names during the Viking Age so that communities could refer to the ancient 'heathen' mounds in justifying their own land rights (Zachrisson 1994). In this manner, burials were the material

¹ The climate catastrophe of AD 536-537 is probably the origin of the *Fimbulvinter*, “the notorious long winter” (Swe. *den beryktade långvintern*) (Gräslund 2007:118; Gräslund & Price 2012). During this event, the sun was obscured by a cloud (probably related to a volcanic eruption) for several years during AD 536-537 (Löwenborg 2012:7).

manifestation of kin-group identities and the rights they possessed. From this evidence, it seems reasonable to infer that the concept of kinship was not just relevant to burial practices but was a fundamental structuring principle across Scandinavia and the Western Diaspora. This being the case, is it possible to identify these complex kin relations within the burial record?

In general, a number of studies have explored the concept of family and kinship through burial practices during the Viking Age. Earlier studies focused on comparative burial structures as evidence of kinship ties (Johnsen-Welinder and Welinder 1973; Jørgensen 1987; Dommasnes 1991; Hansson 1998), while more recent studies have applied paleogenetic techniques like ancient DNA (aDNA) analysis to establish possible kin relationships. These studies are valuable but relatively few have been able to test familial relations of individuals interred together in Viking Age multiple burials. The handful of papers that have successfully produced paleogenetic data have yielded mixed results.

One such study was carried out by Rudbeck and colleagues (2005), who examined the churchyard at Kongemarken near Roskilde in Denmark. This churchyard was used during the late Viking Age and its burials were largely gender-segregated, however the graves of several males were found amongst the female burials. Their positioning seemed to reference a few specific female graves, suggesting to the excavators that they may be kin. Their mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis showed that the sampled individuals were not maternally related, with no indication of direct maternal kinship or sibling kinship between any of the subjects (Rudbeck *et al.* 2005:427).

In a similar study of a 'family constellation' burial from Broby in Sweden, the remains of an older woman and two adolescents buried in close proximity were

tested for a possible family relation (Daskalaki *et al.* 2014:37). The mtDNA results found that both of the children did not share a direct maternal link with the woman, however the authors suggest they could be children belonging to her extended family and were buried alongside the woman, who may have been seen as the matron of the clan (Daskalaki *et al.* 2014:39). Another excellent study carried out by Naumann and colleagues (2014) tested the skeletal material of several individuals interred in multiple burials in the Late Iron Age cemetery of Flakstad in Norway. Their analyses showed that it was unlikely that the individuals were maternally related. While they reiterate that mtDNA results can only reflect direct matrilineal kinship and cannot be used to exclude other varied kinship relations between individuals (that may be revealed using other genomic aDNA techniques), the corresponding isotopic data indicates that the co-buried individuals had significantly different dietary life histories, taken as further evidence that they were probably not closely related (Naumann *et al.* 2014:538).

In contrast, there are two successful cases that have established relatedness of co-buried Viking Age individuals, both of which occur in the context of colonial warfare to the East and West of Scandinavia. Recent analysis of the aDNA sampled from the infamous multiple burial of two male warriors (Gr.295/511 [G196]) at Repton in England has confirmed a first-degree paternal relationship between the men (Jarman 2019). It was first thought that the pair could be half-brothers, however their 20-year age difference indicates they are more likely to have been father and son (Jarman 2019). Jarman (2019) has proposed that the forensic features of the skeletal material align well with the historically documented movements of Olaf, the Viking king of Dublin, killed in AD 874, and his son Eysteinn who was killed in AD 875, both of whom were associated with the Great Army. We will not know for certain until the results of the

osteological analysis are published in the coming months, but as yet it is the only known example of a Viking Age multiple burial in which all interred are related to each on the basis of aDNA evidence.

A further example (also not yet published but available as a preprint) has been presented by Margaryan and colleagues (2019), whose recent work in Viking Age population genomics has identified a number of kin members found across different mortuary contexts. Most notably, their analysis recovered the burial of four brothers interred side by side (plus a further third degree relative, perhaps a cousin) from amongst a total of 34 individuals buried in the Salme II boat burial mentioned in Chapter One.

The evidence of the multiple burial of biological kin is mixed. In cases where the very closest relationships have been recovered— fathers, sons, and brothers—the multiple burials have occurred as a part of military campaigns in various regions of the diaspora, and not as staid family burials as suggested at the outset of this section. This supports the perspective that nuclear families, in peacetime contexts at least, were not commonly interred together. Kinship, on the other hand, appears to have formed a far more valuable concept to burial practices and one that was explicitly referenced in the construction of multiple burials. However, as Zachrisson (1994) has highlighted, the power of kinship resided in the idea of kin— rather than the physical placement of kin in burials. The final type of kinship to be explored is that of social kin.

Social Kin: Mutuality of Being

An anthropological concept of kinship may be more apt for the exploration of Viking Age social relations than one based solely upon biological relatedness. In this context, individuals share a 'mutuality of being' when a person or group of

people are intrinsically linked with the existence of another or others (Sahlins 2011). These individuals are sometimes described collectively as 'mutual persons', or as existing within a state of 'intersubjective belonging', and can be constituted through biological or social relations (Sahlins 2011:2–3). Sahlins' perspective draws upon the Aristotelian view of kinship, in which mutuality of being comes in various forms and degrees and include "persons who belong to one another, who are members of one another, who are co-present in each other, [and] whose lives are joined and interdependent" (Sahlins 2011:11).

Exploring social kinship is a burgeoning line of archaeological enquiry in Viking Age contexts, particularly in relation to the composition and function of Viking war bands and raiding parties but has also been explored at the more prosaic level of interpersonal friendship. Particularly, a growing corpus of work, led by Sigurðsson (1995; 2008, 2010, 2013, 2017), has stressed that friendships were far more fundamental to the organisation and social dynamics of Viking Age societies than a traditional concept of kinship. He has emphasised the importance of friendship in social relations by arguing that kinship was often subordinated to friendship due to the complexities of family composition and the conflicts of loyalty that arose from these relations (Sigurðsson 2017:106). Furthermore, as Viking Age society lacked the institutions that could offer individuals support and security in hard times— a circumstance which also limited the support that a kin group could offer their members in hardship— the loyalty, cooperation and assistance provided by friendships became even more crucial (Sigurðsson 2017:131).

One form of friendship, recognised by many as one of the core components of social relations, was that of the warrior retinue (Brink 2008; Raffield et al. 2015, 2017; Raffield 2016). Brink (2008:13) has shown that the retinue (*hirð* in Old

Norse and *comitatus* in Latin) was modelled on the family unit, as evidenced by the adoption of *hirð* from the OE *hīrēd* ‘retinue, family, household’. Members of the retinue had to submit to the jurisdiction of their leader (ON *drótt*) through an oath of fidelity, giving them the status of ‘table companion’— the right to share the table and bread with the leader and the rest of the retinue (Brink 2008:14). A related term, *lið*, also denoted the warrior brotherhood but could also stand for any other communal group or friendship in which members were obligated to provide mutual support and help (Brink 2008:21). Brink emphasises “it was then important, from an ideological point of view, that this group, which was bound by oaths of fidelity and friendship, should take their meals together” (2008:21).

Apart from forming a basic element of Viking Age social structure in Scandinavia, Raffield and colleagues have also shown that the retinue was a core component of the Viking armies that initiated the Scandinavian colonisation of the British Isles and North Atlantic in the mid to late ninth century (Raffield et al. 2015:36; Raffield 2016:324). They suggest that many aspects of the *lið* align with the psychological concept of the ‘ingroup’: a social group distinguished by a set of genetically inherited or socially learned traits (i.e. ethnic, occupational, religious groups, or as in this case, a military unit). An individual’s identification with an ingroup sees them internalise the group’s defining trait as part of themselves— a process known as identity fusion— and in certain traumatic circumstances (like warfare), ‘visceral and emotional’ relationships develop between ingroup members so much so that they form bonds similar to (and occasionally stronger than) those of kin. According to Raffield and colleagues, identity fusion invokes a strong sense of obligation and commitment to the group “leading them to act altruistically, sometimes to the point of sacrificing their lives for other members” (2015:37–38).

Many aspects of Raffield and colleagues use of ingroup identity share the hallmarks of social kinship through mutuality of being. In a later article, Raffield (2016) points to the constitution of the Great Army as a number of largely autonomous *lið* groups that operated somewhat independently from the Great Army. These groups reflected contemporaneous Scandinavian social structures which emphasised local relationships and alliances formed on the basis of mutual support and reciprocity with regional leaders (Raffield 2016:311). In this manner, Raffield interprets the burial rites observed at Repton and Heath Wood as the expression of close-knit autonomous groups interring their dead in a manner appropriate to each group's shared identity (2016:329). Moreover, in the case of the 'token' deposits of cremated remains at Heath Wood, this could be read as the desire to bury the remains of comrades killed elsewhere amongst those of their own *lið* group (Raffield 2016:329).

I would argue that this may also be observed at Repton, in which a number of multiple burials were constructed over the course of the campaign, containing individuals who may not have died together but were certainly intended to rest together. In summary, on the basis of this evidence it seems appropriate for warrior comrades and friends to be buried together. There may also be a high degree of overlap between biological and social kin in these instances, as has been evidenced on the basis of the aDNA results of the slain warriors from Repton and the Salme II boat burial in Estonia, cited above.

All in all, it seems that kinship was an important guiding element in the construction of burials during the Viking Age, and is a concept specifically observed in multiple burials. However, what is clear is that kinship did not function in these burials as earlier interpretations have held. Particularly, it

could be that the *idea* of kinship— rather than actual *biological* kinship— was used to substantiate *óðal* claims in Scandinavia and similar territorial claims in the lands of the Western Diaspora. The only burials in which we see kin relations confirmed by paleogenetics are those made in circumstances where social kinship comes to the fore, i.e. in environments of colonisation and warfare. There is also much overlap in the example of the *lið* groups, who seem to be constituted of a combination of biological and social kin relations. We will likely never know which aspect of the relationship was the determining factor in multiple burials in these circumstances— whether kin buried in these contexts were first and foremost warrior brothers, or biological brothers. Further analysis needs to be carried out in relation to the interplay of biological and social kinship in Viking Age society before we can better understand how each form may feature in the burial record more generally. However, for the purposes of this thesis, the multiple burial of 'family' groups, whether nuclear or extended, were not a common occurrence. Instead, a focus on social kin and multiple burial may be more fruitful. Moving now from social kin to social others, let us explore the characterisation of multiple burials as a process of Othering.

The Others: Sacrificial Victims, Deviants and Slaves

Multiple burials have attracted archaeological attention because of the possibility that they contain at least one individual who was intentionally killed, usually to accompany someone of special status. Traditionally, multiple burials have been viewed through the lens of the historical and literary sources. The accounts of early chroniclers, such as Adam of Bremen (Tschan 1959), Thietmar of Merseburg (Warner 2013) and Ibn Faḍlān (Lunde & Stone 2000) relate a number of sacrificial events during their travels across the Norse world and have been heavily drawn upon to contextualise cases of multiple burial. At the same time, references to the practice of human sacrifice regularly feature in the saga

texts and the literary exploration of this aspect of Old Norse belief has produced a robust body of scholarship used to enliven the archaeological material (e.g. Simpson 1967; Davidson 1968; Näsström 2001; Brink 2012). These written sources have been valuable in bringing to life a worldview so far removed from our own, but their allure has also proved restrictive— exploration of this particular Viking Age mortuary custom rarely strays beyond the literary evidence. It is in this light that the archaeology of human sacrifice and multiple burial has been pursued.

Human Sacrifice

A preoccupation with human sacrifice is particularly evident in one of the earliest archaeological papers concerning the practice, published by Skaarup in 1972, in which he recounts the circumstances of an unusual burial excavated in Stengade a year earlier. Here, a wooden chest was found placed transversely above a burial from the Roman period. It contained the remains of two individuals in ‘unusual combination’; one man was interred in a natural position, while his companion had had his feet bound, his head decapitated, and his body placed in a twisted position with his hand ‘carelessly’ placed under the back of the first man (Skaarup 1972:7). This led Skaarup to suggest this was the “macabre sacrifice of a bound and decapitated slave. His task was probably to accompany the Stengade Viking and take care of him in Valhalla” (1972:7).

Skaarup also notes that a further multiple burial at Lejre demonstrates a similar configuration, suggesting that the archaeological record is increasingly confirming what ‘we already knew’ of the historical texts (1972:7). He goes on to cite at length Ibn Faḍlān’s eye-witness account of the sacrifice of a slave girl for a chieftain from the Volga River region of modern-day Russia, remarking that although the circumstances of both burials do not correspond perfectly, there is

clearly some substance to the account. He finishes by asking “What if we had similar reports to support, for example, Bronze Age oak coffin finds?” (Skaarup 1972:9). It is not hard to miss the optimism with which some archaeologists of the late twentieth century viewed the increasing sophistication of the discipline’s methods and the possibilities this brought when used in tandem with the historical sources.

Skaarup’s enthusiasm inspired a number of studies which emerged in the 1980s and 1990s that attempted to establish a corpus of sacrificial burials from which archaeologists could quantify how common the practice actually was in relation to the literature, and how it may be identified archaeologically. Perhaps most prominent in this endeavour was the paper published by Hemmendorff in 1984, which provided a synthesis of all possible sacrificial burials recovered by modern archaeological excavations across Scandinavia from the 1960s onwards (see Hemmendorff 1984 and references therein).

Like Skaarup, Hemmendorff (1984) also prefaced his discussion with a review of the relevant historical and literary sources, prompting him to observe that while the practice of human sacrifice is thoroughly substantiated in these texts, the recovery of graves containing possible victims is far rarer than the literature implies. His own recovery of one such grave in 1974 at Bollstanäs in Sweden led him to ponder why this was. At Bollstanäs, a cremation grave was topped with the dual inhumations of two prone individuals who had been decapitated and bound. To account for such an unusual grave, Hemmendorff reviewed the handful of previously recorded graves that exhibited practices like prone positioning and decapitation. Perhaps inevitably, he came to question the role of multiple burials; in one of the final sections of the paper (under ‘other possible

sacrificial graves’)² he summarises cases of multiple burial in the suggestion that these may also have contained sacrifices, although he acknowledges that no such evidence has yet been found (Hemmendorff 1984:10). His conclusion is that the identification of extraordinary bodily treatment, like prostration, beheading and binding, differentiates the identity of individuals between those who were sacrificed (most probably coming from the slave class) and ‘naturally deceased’ family members (1984:7,11).

Hemmendorff’s allusion to the significance of multiple burial in the sacrifice of humans was taken up by Skaarup in a similar paper published five years later and is one of the only works dedicated to exploring multiple burial (or more specifically ‘double’ burials) in the Viking Age. In his article *Dobbelgrave* (1989), Skaarup surveyed the corpus of double burials so far identified across Denmark, noting that two major configurations were observable; the vertical and horizontal placement of the bodies. The different treatment of individuals across these two burial forms indicated that two distinctly dissimilar concepts produced each type; one a ‘macabre sacrificial act’ and the other a “peaceful and sympathetic ‘family reunion’ after death” (Skaarup 1989:8).

The multiple burial was also of major focus for Engdahl (1990), who explored evidence of human sacrifice in graves across Scandinavia during the Late Iron Age, in an attempt to establish how commonly it occurred in relation to burial rites across the region generally, and whether the significance of the practice could be identified archaeologically. Much of her data was formed by the ‘sacrificial’ multiple burials previously published by the authors mentioned above using similar criteria as Hemmendorff in distinguishing cases of human

² “*Andra tänkbara offergravar*” (Hemmendorff 1984:10) translated by the present author.

sacrifice. However, she countered his assertion that the practice was more common than the archaeological record suggests, instead emphasising that the evidence confirms that the practice was reserved for the elite of society and occasionally for those of the warrior class. Specifically, she noted that sacrificial ‘victims’ could have been widows, slaves and foster-brothers, however each could have had their own distinguishing ritual significance (Engdahl 1990:44–46).

Holmquist-Olausson (1990) also recognised the special ritual character of another potential sacrificial burial recovered at Birka, that of the ‘Elkman’ in grave 129 A/B. In this case, the supine inhumation of a man with an elk antler placed beside his head was accompanied by another inhumation stacked above him. This individual had been decapitated and was placed in a twisted position in the grave. He was also missing his right foot. Holmquist-Olausson believes the second individual probably was a slave and concluded cautiously that he may have been sacrificed in connection with the death of the Elkman (1990:181). However, on the basis of Skaarup’s earlier distinction between acts of sacrifice and more regular multiple burials, she questioned the validity of the term ‘sacrifice’ for burials of this nature, citing that Engdahl (1990) had successfully shown that particular sacrificial acts can have a number of diverse causes and meanings (Holmquist Olausson 1990:177). The ritual-like nature of the placement of the elk antler, the sacrificed youth and the meaningful modification of the associated weaponry all speak to a special ritual procedure following a specific traumatic event, perhaps one related to warfare (Holmquist Olausson 1990:181).

The suitability of the term ‘sacrifice’ was also taken up by Nordenstorm four years later. His review of the direct and indirect textual accounts of the practice

showed no clear tie to any aspect of belief in Old Norse religion. Instead, he asserts that the only types of killing that are mentioned in the sources is the suicide of widows (and foster brothers) and the execution of slaves, both of which occurred for the benefit of the deceased in the afterlife (Nordenstorm 1994:276). Nordenstorm infers that the killing of these individuals was not intended as a 'gift' to any higher power, and as such they should not be referred to as a sacrifice. This is an argument also made by Näsström in her seminal work *Blot* (2001), in which she surveys the evidence of sacrificial practices in Scandinavia. In her view, the concept of human sacrifice plays a key role in the myths and literature of the period which may be based upon older traditions, but the 'sacrifice' of widows, children, social outcasts and deviants was not common practice. Instead, the few cases of human sacrifice were probably made in response to crisis situations (famine, warfare etc.), rather than in relation to burial practices. Moreover, in these circumstances, the literature suggests that the sacrifice had to be socially and personally valuable, meaning that social deviants and criminals were not selected for these purposes.

On the basis of these works, it is clear that the nature of each multiple burial can be diverse. Sacrificial rituals carried out to avert societal crises cannot be viewed in unison with the killing of people to accompany the deceased in the afterlife. Both Shetelig (1910:195) and Nordenstorm (1994:276) have suggested (albeit, almost 85 years apart) that individuals killed to join others in burial may have been conceptualised closer to objects rather than subjects, perceived more akin to grave goods than people. As Shetelig summarises:

“The world conditions and relations of man were at that time believed to be of greatest importance as regards his coming existence, and this belief was strong enough to impose on the surviving an exorbitant expenditure in the equipment of the grave... Ideas of this kind afforded most favourable circumstances for developing the custom of “Suttee”. Moreover, the wife was in point of law still

regarded as the property of her husband, and the man had to win his bride by regular purchase. Though such rules were at this time of more formal than practical importance, they may have led to the general desire to complete the grave-goods into the last and horrible consequence of offering the wife at the man's burial".

(Shetelig 1910:195)

This supposition is a powerful one because it opens up the possibility that, in the Viking Age at least, not all human individuals shared the same status as 'person' in the eyes of their communities at all times. The implication of this is just as powerful, in that it calls on us to view the archaeological record in the same manner as those who were creating it. Despite this development in the discourse, the concept of 'person' has not been applied to— or tested using—the multiple burial corpus. In order to do so, we must better understand the individuals interred in these burials.

Deviant Burials, Deviant People?

As we have seen, the relational nature of multiple burials provides the setting for the differential bodily treatment of those interred. Individuals killed as part of burial rituals are often thought to have been viewed as socially deviant by their communities because of the ostensibly 'disrespectful' way they have been treated to modern eyes. As a result, research focused on multiple burial has been drawn into an uneasy relationship with theories of deviancy and *otherness*. The small number of Viking Age multiple burials that exhibit practices like prone positioning have reinforced the idea that they contain deviants who were deliberately rejected by their societies. And, as examples of 'deviant' multiple burials are examined in relative isolation, or incorporated into wider syntheses of deviant practices, the validity of such a characterisation has not been questioned.

The term ‘deviant burial’ was first coined by Geake (1992) who used it to describe burials that did not fit well within normative practices in the Anglo-Saxon research tradition. She specified that deviant burials can be identified by a number of distinct traits; variations in grave orientation and body positions that differ from the majority within a cemetery, individuals that display injuries or other skeletal abnormalities, distinctive treatments of bodies that include decapitation, stoning and binding, and the sparse deposition or complete absence of grave goods (Geake 1992:87–88). Geake’s work formed the foundation upon which an extensive discourse on deviancy has been built concerning the Anglo-Saxon material— driven in large part by Reynolds’ opus, *Anglo-Saxon Deviant Burial Customs* (2009)— whose influence is clearly evident in the few studies that explore Viking Age deviant burial practices.

The connection between multiple burial and deviancy is immediately apparent in two early studies of deviant burial practices in the Scandinavian context. In 2005, Taylor produced a thesis to identify types of deviant burials across the Nordic countries (excluding Finland) with a special emphasis on distinguishing burials connected with the supernatural, and those that were not. Her work was followed shortly afterwards by Thäte (2007), who considered deviant practices in relation to her wider interest in the re-use of monuments in Late Iron Age Scandinavia. Both authors used definitions similar to Geake’s but for the addition of a further few ‘deviant’ traits; the inclusion of ostensibly non-functional (or symbolic) grave goods, the use of objects to weigh or pin down the deceased’s corpse, and the multiple burial (Taylor 2005:20; Thäte 2007:266–267).

Much like Hemmendorff’s (1984) assessment of ‘sacrificial’ victims in multiple burials, Taylor’s perspective is also founded upon the premise that differential

bodily treatment of individuals within the burial distinguishes between different types of relationships. For example, Taylor asserts that:

“Some multiple burials appear to be kinship burials, where the skeletons usually lie beside each other and have a similar status of grave-goods and dress accessories, exhibit a similar laying out of the corpse and usually contain the remains of a male and a female, or less commonly an adult and a child... Other than being rare, kinship burials do not generally show signs of deviancy... Suttee burials may take the form of kinship burial or female inserted above male... If the female skeleton is not laid out respectfully next to her husband and inserted carelessly into the grave, such disrespect may be indicative of a case of master and female slave and should be considered as deviant. Some double burials appear to contain a master/mistress plus a sacrificed slave and should be considered as deviant... In the rarer cases of multiple burial, where the bodies exhibit mutilation, the remains may have belonged to social outcasts who were buried together”.

(Taylor 2005:13–14)

Taylor’s work is wholly underpinned by the concept of ‘respect’; mutilation is conceptualised as a punishment for criminality and, when combined with prostration (a far less common practice), Taylor views this as the ultimate form of disrespectful death reserved for those who had committed the most ‘heinous crime or anti-social behaviour’ (2005:155). However, she also notes that slaves accompanying their masters could also have been treated in this manner, though she does not explore why this was the case or whether these individuals were actually slaves.

Conversely, she notes that the burial of individuals who appear to have a connection with the supernatural (deducible from the artefacts with which they were interred) rarely exhibit any bodily display of deviancy (Taylor 2005:152). Rather, Taylor suggests that these burials contain those of good social standing, who were trusted by their community not to use the magical and amuletic items with which they were accompanied for malevolent purposes (Taylor 2005:185).

In my view, the connection between respectful treatment, deviancy and the supernatural needs to be unpacked further, particularly in light of more recent developments in archaeological theory that recognise the role of alternate ontological structures in defining normativity and alterity.

One such person who has taken on the task of further exploring the worldviews behind such burial practices is Gardęła, having published extensively on the ambivalence of funerary violence and its material culture (2009, 2011b, 2011a, 2012b, 2012a, 2013a, 2013b, 2014). Of particular relevance is his observation that some Old Norse texts which reference peculiar mortuary treatments were not performed in contempt, but rather in veneration of the deceased (Gardęła 2013a:107). For example, the *Hálfðanar saga Svarta* (2011) narrates the events succeeding the death of King Hálfðan, whose body is dismembered into four parts so that the people of four different *fylker* could benefit from having his remains interred in their land. Gardęła explores cases of decapitation, prostration and stoning across the Viking World, and notes that the context of each burial is distinctly different, indicating that the meaning underpinning each one was probably just as diverse. Specifically, the varied placement of stones upon bodies is indicative of a range of practical and symbolic agendas; in some instances, it appears stones were used to prevent the dead ‘rising again’, at other times their purpose may have been to protect the grave from intruders, while other possibilities also include using stones to create a particular aesthetic effect or to provide restorative or healing properties for the deceased (Gardęła 2013a:120). Importantly, Gardęła reiterates that the ‘oddity’ of a grave cannot be taken as a proxy for the ‘deviant’ identity of the deceased; “some acts, although violent to our modern Western minds may have been seen by the Viking Age people as sanctioned and necessary. Violence could therefore signal not only fear but also affection” (Gardęła 2013a:120).

Gardela's findings are very much in line with those shared earlier by Thäte in 2007. She considered aspects of deviancy as a part of her wider aim of exploring strategies of monument re-use across Late Iron Age Scandinavia and she gives particular consideration to multiple burials (as a deviant practice) in this endeavour (Thäte 2007:267). Chiefly, Thäte is of the view that violent 'deviant' practices exhibited in multiple burials (most likely the graves of masters and slaves) could either be a superstitious method of inhibiting the reanimation of the corpse, or the physical result of the method of execution (2007:267–268). However, as part of her analysis, Thäte also tested whether the location of multiple burials demonstrate the same spatial patterning as deviant single burials in relation to ancient monuments, showing a distinct difference in the spatiality of each type of burial. While re-use sites containing deviant burials were relatively rare, it appears that multiple burials were positioned in remarkably close relation to both ancient and contemporaneous monuments. Overall, she concludes that high-status individuals (rather than social deviants) re-used ancient mounds in an attempt to claim legitimation by association with ancestor 'heroes' and to express the elevated social position of the deceased (2007:240–241). Regarding the place of multiple burials within this spatial strategy, Thäte concludes that it is impossible to identify due to the diversity of types of multiple burial she encountered (2007:273). Instead, the motivations behind each seemed to have varied across each region she examined, inferring that deviancy can only be defined at the smallest of scales (Thäte 2007:272).

Toplak (2018) has also stressed the importance of context when interpreting specific burial practices, and has argued for the outright severing of the link between particular mortuary traits and deviancy. He cites, as an example, the Viking Age cemetery at Kopparsvik, located on the Swedish island of Gotland.

The cemetery contains the prone inhumations of approximately 50 individuals across a number of single and multiple burials. If the sites' disproportionately large number of prone burials were to be regarded as deviant, this would incorporate as many as one sixth of the total Kopparsvik population (Toplak 2018:86). Rather, Toplak highlights the consistency and care shown in making these burials, suggesting that they should be viewed in light of the contemporary historical sources which establish that an early Christian community was resident in the area at this time (Toplak 2018:91). Accordingly, the prone burials, often cited by others as deviant, are better interpreted as an expression of Christian piety— an act of humble prostration— wholly appropriate for the identity of the deceased (2018:87–88).

These studies demonstrate clearly that archaeological concepts of deviancy must be reframed and— particularly when assessing Viking Age burial practices— used with great subtlety (if used at all). Price (2019) has presented a way forward in his landmark study on Old Norse *seiðr* magic, which is fundamentally concerned with the 'idea of the Other'. He has argued, "there is a world of difference between the deviant [...] and the abiding challenge of the unfamiliar" (Price 2002:45). What is of importance is not the study of the deviancy of certain aspects of the archaeological record, rather emphasis should be placed on exploring the world-views out of which those particular material signatures were produced (Price 2019:19). In his own endeavour to achieve this in relation to the *seiðr* ritual complex, Price adopts the concept of the 'Odd', as offered by Chippendale (1995:437). A perspective of 'oddness' acknowledges the past's right to be itself, regardless of how peculiar it seems:

"The pursuit of an 'odder' archaeology is not about a quest for the exotic, the fossilisation of unfamiliar cultures in the museum display of a colonialising Romantic. While we should be honest enough to admit to a certain thrill of

displacement in our interactions... we should nevertheless remember that socially-embedded belief systems do not involve a juxtaposition of the sacred (read: exotic) with the mundane; the two are inseparable. The completely ordinary social context of most ritual performance in traditional cultures is rarely stressed enough."

(Price 2019:18–19)

Price has made a compelling case for the conflation of the 'Ordinary' and the 'Odd' (or 'Other' used previously) in Viking Age contexts, demonstrating through his exploration of *seiðr* that both concepts existed together in complete harmony in Viking Age society. His position is one to which I wholly subscribe—a stance which opens up a number of new paths along which multiple burials can be explored. These burials contain neither the 'Ordinary' nor the 'Other', but people who are variously shaped by their relationships with the world around them, and it is through a relational approach that we can move beyond the long-maintained duality of the Ordinary/Other.

Not Ordinary nor Other: Where to from Here?

I close this section with an excerpt which demonstrates Price's focus on the myriad of relational dimensions encapsulated within a single Viking Age multiple burial. Here, he explores the live interment of a woman with her deceased husband in a burial chamber, as recounted by Ibn Rustah in the early tenth century:

"We must picture here a couple, living their lives in much the same way as everyone else: the social round of family, friends and acquaintances; the everyday interactions of trade and exchange; all the activities of the domestic and 'professional' sphere. And yet when the man of the household dies, his partner - known to all the community in the network of relationships just mentioned - is buried alive in the chamber with his corpse. We can perhaps imagine the feelings of the woman, though we should not be too sure of this. It is hard enough to conjure up the level of horror that we would feel today before such an event, but harder still to envisage a

situation where that emotion may not have been paramount... And how did the onlookers feel, watching this ritual entombment and then walking away, going home or to some continued funeral ceremony, or passing the sealed mound in the subsequent hours and days? How did they articulate the knowledge that inside that grave a woman they knew was slowly suffocating, dying in the dark beside the rotting body of her partner, and that one day the same fate might be theirs? To us this seems unthinkable, and yet to at least some of the people of the Viking Age, at an institutionalised and socially-sanctioned level, it clearly was not."

(Price 2019:19)

This description reveals the incredible complexity of relationships that are negotiated through multiple burials, between the material and phenomenological components that exist variously in space and through time, but also the relationships negotiated between persons— those within the burial and between the living and the dead. These burials bring together diverse material, spatial, and temporal qualities which are experienced relationally between entities in different ways. To ascribe them a one-dimensional status— a family burial or that of a master and slave— is not to recognise the full complexity of this phenomenon. The research presented here attempts to move away from such concepts by focusing instead on how people emerge through the fluid relationships articulated through the complexities of multiple burial.

This chapter has examined previous research on the multiple burial through the dominant dichotomous narrative of the Ordinary/Other. Analysis of the kinship argument, in which multiple burials are conceived of as the ordinary burials of family or kin, has shown that the connection between kinship and multiple burial is far more complex than this interpretation allows. Kinship, in terms of lineage, was a fundamental concept in structuring burial practices, however this did not extend to all members of a kin group, just encompassing those (or the idea of those) through which land claims and inheritance could be established.

The emotional bonds many envision when interpreting multiple burials are rare and are probably most relevant to the collective interment of social kin like the *lið*, which could encompass both social and biological kin relations.

Alternatively, the review of literature focused on social Others in multiple burials, as evidenced through human sacrifice or the disrespectful (or deviant) treatment of individuals, has been undermined by the growing recognition that past ontological structures may have defined normativity and alterity in ways which are unfamiliar to modern audiences. The differential treatment of various individuals in multiple burials is often ambiguous and may be used to articulate different relationships which are not immediately clear to us. I suggest that a close contextual analysis of the various relations between humans, animals, things, time and space articulated through multiple burials may yield new insights regarding their nature and role within the wider suite of diverse burial practices which characterise the Viking Age mortuary landscape.

Multiple Burial Across the Viking World

The previous chapter outlined how the major interpretive schemas through which our understanding of the multiple burial rite developed. It was found that a framework of deviancy brings with it a number of ontological assumptions which does not fully appreciate alternate ways of understanding the world and how this can be traced in the archaeological record. Furthermore, a concept of kinship was found to be valid, but in a much more abstract and fluid manner than previous considerations have envisioned. So, where does this lead us? This chapter presents the results relating to the material, spatial and temporal construction of these burials, with a view to establishing their nature beyond the deviant 'Other' and the 'Ordinary' family, and situating the practice firmly within wider Viking Age burial traditions. I conclude with some thoughts on how we may explore the production of personhood in these unique burials.

Single versus Multiple Burial

There are 2198 graves making up the database for this research, collected from the Scandinavian study areas of Kaupang and Hedeby, and the western lands of the Scandinavian diaspora; Britain, Ireland and Iceland. Table 1 and Table 2 show the breakdown of the data. Exactly 91 are counted as multiple burials and 2107 are counted as single burials. Of all study areas, the Scandinavian sites account for a much larger percentage of the burials, however Kaupang only contributes 7% of this while Hedeby makes up the bulk of the remaining data. For the Western Diaspora, Iceland provides the most data for this study, while Scotland,

England and Ireland contribute somewhat similar portions. Perhaps reflecting its reduced geographical size, the data from Mann contributes comparatively little to the overall dataset

Region	Multiple	Single	Total	% of total data
Scandinavia	45	1445	1490	68
Western Diaspora	46	662	708	32
Total	91	2107	2198	100

Table 1. Number of burials by region.

Site	Multiple	Single	Total	% of total data
Hedeby	20	1312	1332	61
Kaupang	25	133	158	7
Iceland	18	295	313	14
Scotland	10	127	137	6
England	12	116	128	6
Ireland	4	100	104	5
Mann	2	24	26	1
Total	91	2107	2198	100

Table 2. Number of burials by study area.

Despite both regions providing vastly different numbers of burials, they share similar numbers of multiple burials. The total burial number is not aligned with the abundance of multiple burials. The two Scandinavian sites only yield 45 multiple burials which make up 3% of the total 1490 graves, while the 46 multiple burials recorded in the Western Diaspora account for 6.5% of the total 708 graves. On the face of it, it would appear that multiple burials are more prevalent in the West than in Scandinavia during the Viking Age. But this might not actually be the case when considering how small a sample size Hedeby and Kaupang make-up of the entire Scandinavian corpus. For example, Stylegar estimates that in 2010 there were approximately 8000 known Viking Age graves in Norway alone (2010:71). Moreover, the regional variation of burial practices known to occur throughout the Scandinavian peninsula and southern Scandinavia would also suggest trends identified at Kaupang and Hedeby would

not accurately represent the totality of burial customs (Svanberg 2003). The discrepancies between the proportions of multiple burials for Hedeby and Kaupang, as demonstrated by Table 2, are testament to this regional diversity; Hedeby only yields 20 multiple burials amounting to just 1.5% of the site's total, while at Kaupang— a site with over eight times fewer graves— multiple burials amount to over 15% of its corpus.

Like the Scandinavian sample, multiple burial practices vary within the Western Diaspora also in terms of frequency of use and their composition (Figure 2). The study area with the highest proportional incidence of multiple burials is England, whose 12 multiples make up 9% as of their total burial corpus. Scotland and Mann also yield relatively large proportions of multiple burials, while the percentage within Iceland and Ireland's corpora is slightly less.



Figure 2. Proportion of multiple burials as a percent of total burial corpus for each area.

While single burial is by far the dominant mode of burial for all regions considered in this study, it appears that multiple burial is a common, if infrequent, feature of burial practices across the Western Viking World. The disparity of multiple burial frequencies between the two Scandinavian samples makes reaching a conclusion about the significance of the rite within wider burial trends across Viking Age Scandinavia very difficult indeed and inhibits it from being robustly compared with the frequencies of multiple burials in the West.

The figures for the Scandinavian sample are only partially in line with those presented by Holck (1987), whose survey of 1082 cremation deposits from Early and Late Iron Age contexts showed that multiple burials account for 4.4% of the total from south-eastern Norway, and only 1.3% of those of the same age from Denmark. The Danish figure is consistent with the proportion of graves from Viking Age Hedeby (1.5%), however the Norwegian figure seems considerably lower than Kaupang's proportion of Viking Age multiple burials (15%). Counting only the burials in which the remains of all individuals are interred in the same context at Kaupang (n=16), as is the case for Holck's cremations, multiples still account for 10% of all burials. Holck's Vestfold sample only yields six multiple cremation deposits, equating to just under 5% of the total 126 graves in his sample. In any case, these figures may suggest that the use of multiple burial was consistently limited in Denmark from the Early to the Late Iron Age, yet experienced a sharp rise in popularity during this period in Norway

Scandinavian Sample		Western Diaspora	
Total No.	45/1490	Total No.	46/708
Rel. Freq. (%)	3%	Rel. Freq. (%)	6.5 %
Avg. across sample	8.7%	Avg. across region	6.8%

Table 3. Frequencies of multiple burial (MB) for each region.

On the basis of averages, the data presented in this research suggests that multiple burial figured relatively frequently in the burial rites of both regions (Table 3). Whether Kaupang's large number of multiple burials is actually representative of the wider use of the practice across Norway is unclear. Perhaps the settlement's cemetery held a special socio-ritual status which necessitated multiple burial, but only further analysis of the whole Norwegian corpus would set Kaupang within its proper context, an endeavour beyond the scope of this research. Taking the number of multiple burials at Kaupang and Hedeby at face value,³ all that can be suggested here is that the multiple burial rite may have been practiced more sporadically at a localised level across Scandinavia than in the Western Diaspora region, which demonstrates a lesser yet more consistent use of the rite in most areas. But, again, a much wider analysis of burial rites across Scandinavia is needed to verify such a suggestion. If, however, this was borne out by further study, could a greater consistency of multiple burial use across the Western Diaspora indicate that the practice was closely connected with processes of colonisation? For now, this idea must be set aside, but by looking more closely at their place in the landscape across the Western Diaspora, and locally within the burial grounds in which they are situated, light might be shed on the rationales behind their creation.

Multiple Burials in the Landscape

Burials are rarely made without great deliberation as to their placement in the landscape. By exploring the intentional placement of multiple burials in relation to the cultural landscapes in which they are embedded, we may be able to gain

³ Acknowledging that the Scandinavian sample at question here is small and biased towards urban practices, a very different picture may be presented if rural Scandinavian multiple burials were included.

insight in to how these connections were used to constitute identity and personhood in these settings. In general, the 91 multiple burials in this research are distributed very evenly across all areas where Viking Age burials are found (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Distribution of MBs across the Western Diaspora. The Kaupang and Hedeby cemeteries are represented by a single large dot each.

There are minor clusters of multiple burials regionally, for example in Derbyshire in England, the north coast of Iceland and, to a far lesser extent, the area around Dublin in Ireland. However, it is probable that in most cases, these clusters simply coincide with a greater intensity of Viking Age settlement. This

certainly seems the case for the clustering in Iceland, which occurs in line with the distribution of known Viking Age graves in general (Figure 4). Orkney also demonstrates a density of multiple burials, possibly reflecting the lengthier phase of Scandinavian interaction and settlement than other areas of the Western Diaspora (Ritchie 1976; Graham-Campbell 1998; Sharples and Pearson 1999; Barrett et al. 2000).

In other cases, the increased frequency of multiple burials may reflect certain circumstances experienced on a local scale. The four burials located at Repton and Heath Wood in Derbyshire could represent a local bias towards the practice. Both sites have been interpreted as the winter campsites of the Great Army, who were historically documented to have been in the area from AD 873 to 874 (Kjølbye-Biddle and Biddle 1992:39; Richards et al. 2004:100). The increased frequency of multiple burial in areas with documented military activity could suggest that the practice was regularly used for the burial of combatants, which may be a direct consequence of the functioning of ingroup dynamics as proposed by Raffield and colleagues (2015).

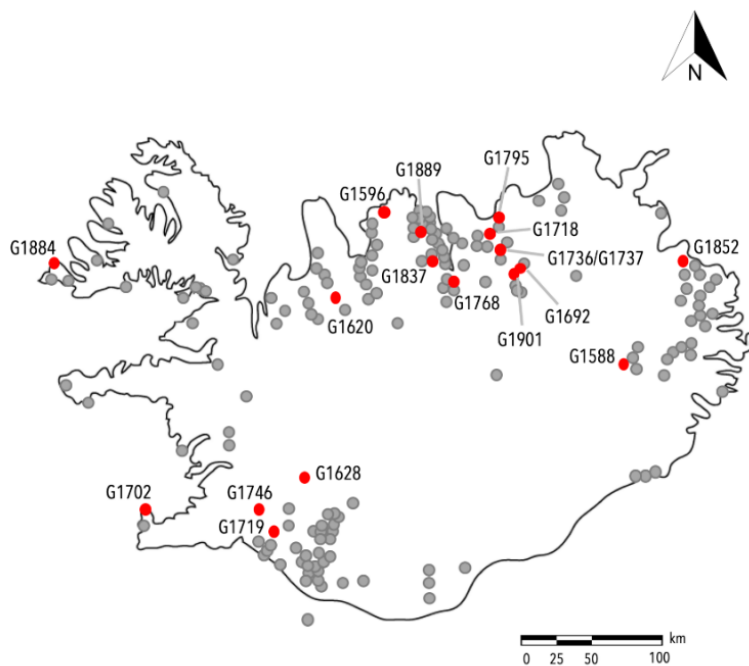


Figure 4. Distribution of MBs (red) amongst wider distribution of SBs (grey) across Iceland.

This may also be part of a wider trend of battle related co-burial which includes the building of mass graves that occur across other areas of military activity in the south of England.⁴

Landscape Choice

The decision to create multiple burials in particular landscapes can tell us much about the community who made the burials, and how they perceived the people they were interring. A well-established aspect of Viking Age burial practice is their preference for re-using existing prehistoric monuments. While this type of burial will be discussed in greater detail in the succeeding section on Temporal Relations (p.115), it is worth exploring some traits of this tradition here.

In areas of the Western Diaspora, making use of landscapes already used for burial forms a significant practice in the siting of multiple burials. In England, eight of the twelve multiple burials were constructed either as a part of earlier monuments (Aspatria [G102], Claughton Hall [G134], Sandford Moor [G201] and Santon Downham [G202]) or within pre-existing cemeteries used by the Saxons (Repton [G192, G194, G196] and Sedgeford [G204]), while both Manx burials took advantage of established burial areas dating to the Neolithic (Ballateare [G2012]) and the early Christian period (Balladoole [G2010]).

In Scotland, six of the ten multiple burials were integrated with pre-Viking Age features; at Finstown [G2278], Housegord [G2297], Stenness [G2350] and Tote Skeabost [G2358], prehistoric mounds were selected for subsequent Viking Age interments, while the two multiple burials found in the Westness cemetery were

⁴ Notable mass graves from southern England include those found at St John's College in Oxford and Ridgeway Hill in Dorset, as well as the charnel deposit at Repton in Derbyshire, as mentioned on page 13.

placed neatly amongst the earlier Christian lintel burials (Figure 5). Three of the four Irish multiple burials made direct use of existing burial grounds; a Bronze Age cemetery at Church Bay [G1911], a native Irish cave used as a cemetery at Cloghermore [G1913], and a Bronze Age mound used for the subsequent insertion of a Viking Age inhumation at Croghan Erin [G1919].

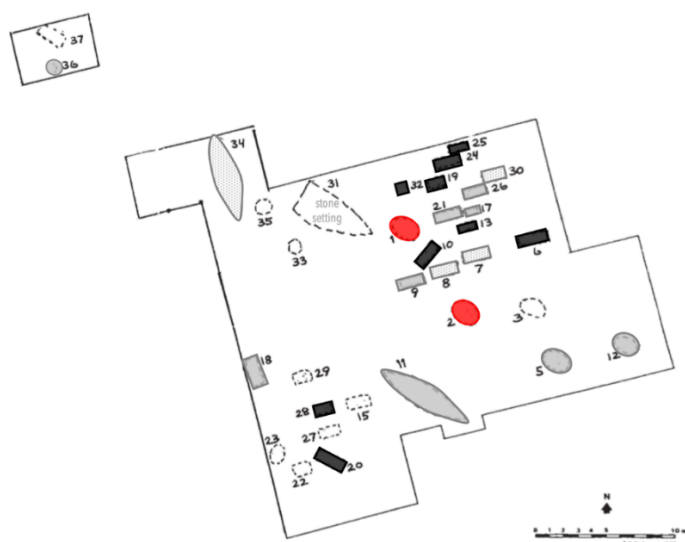


Figure 5. Site plan of Westness cemetery. Figure amended from Sellevold (1999:6 fig.2). VA MBs = red; VA SBs = grey; possible VA SBs = dotted grey; Earlier lintel burials = black.

The nature of these interactions varies. In many cases, as at Westness [G2388, G2360], the burials integrate peacefully with the existing graves of local communities or are made with respect to the existing burials in antecedent mounds causing little, if any, disturbance. However, there are some multiple burials whose siting seems somewhat antagonistic. The construction of the Balladoole boat burial in Mann is a fine example.

The Balladoole burial [G2010] was placed at the entrance way to the prehistoric enclosure at Chapel Hill, directly above a number of earlier Christian lintel graves (Figure 6). Tarlow has interpreted the intentional disturbance of the earlier Christian graves by the Norse settlers as an act of ‘violent antipathy’ directed towards the local population and a ‘forceful expression of difference’ (1997:138). She argues that the disarticulation and dispersal of the local

interments was not merely incidental to the process of burial construction but was a core element of the burial's wider agenda. By being capped with a two-meter-high stone cairn and an accompanying wooden marker— all located at the top of Chapel Hill and at the entrance to an ancient enclosure— the burial would have been highly visible across the landscape and would “intrude upon the daily lived experience of people of the area... a constant reminder of the presence of the Norse” (Tarlow 1997:140).

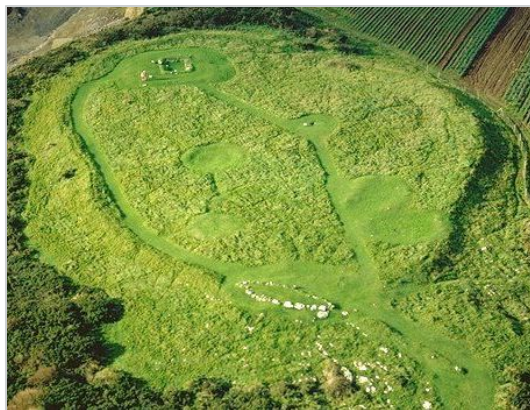


Figure 6. Balladoole boat burial cairn at entrance to prehistoric enclosure. After Wilson (2008:39).



Figure 7. Placement of boat burial (male's grave indicated in orange) amongst earlier Christian burials. After Bersu and Wilson (1966:5) and Wilson (2008:40).

There is no doubt that the placement of the Balladoole burial purposefully made use of a prominent place of existing significance and was quite destructive to extant burials. However, whether this occurred within a mentality of desecration or integration is impossible to confirm. The placement of the Balladoole male in the end of the boat that aligned with the majority of earlier lintel graves may be read in either perspective (Figure 7). But, the behaviours Tarlow has identified as disrespectful (the disarticulation and dispersal of non-Norse skeletal remains) are actually observed within other non-syncretic Viking Age cemeteries, of which Kaupang is an example. I am of the opinion that this says more about the alternate ontological status of skeletal material in a Viking Age worldview (e.g.

Fahlander and Oestigaard 2008; Fahlander 2018) than the attitude of Scandinavian settlers towards local populations.

In Kaupang, multiple burials are predominantly clustered within the promontory cemetery of Bikjholberget, located immediately to the north east of the settlement. Here, 22 of the 25 multiple burials recovered at Kaupang are nestled into the narrow corridor of flat terrain surrounded by rock wall (Figure 8). The Bikjholberget cemetery is the central-most burial ground of Kaupang, and one cannot help thinking that the cemetery served as a focal point to the area. However, all but a few burials here were flat graves covered by stone settings so it is difficult to gauge how visible they were in the landscape, as compared with the numerous barrows visible across the water at Lamøya.

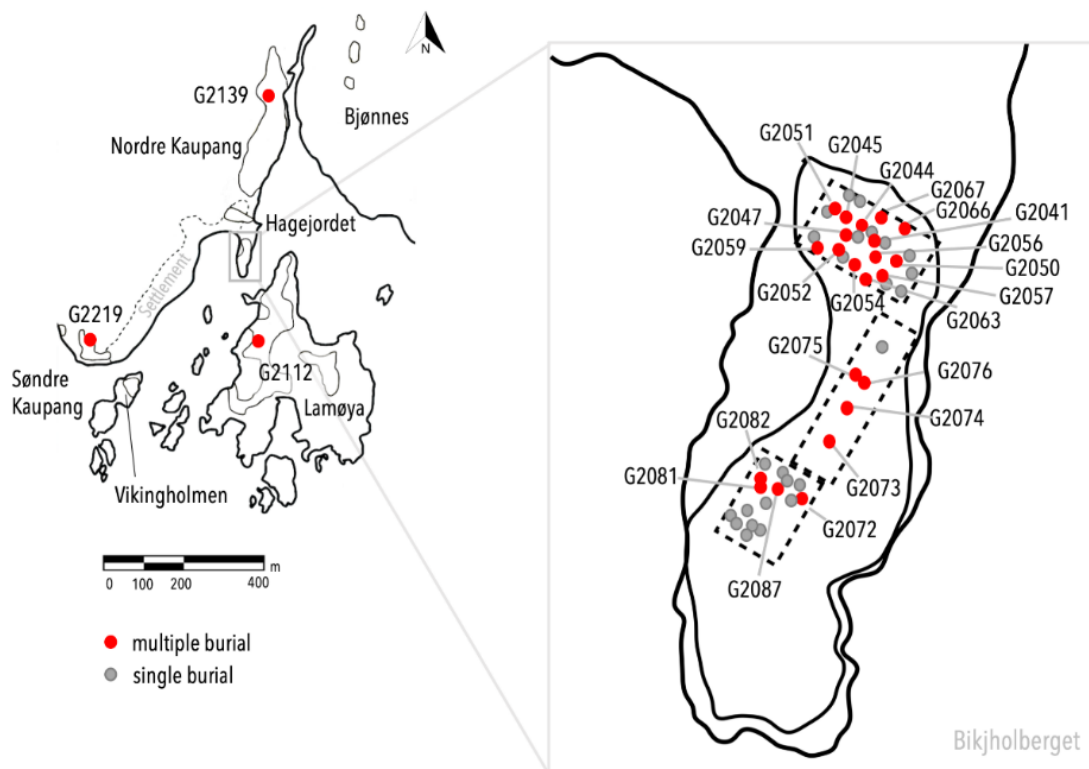


Figure 8. Distribution of MBs (red) amongst all other SBs (grey) at Kaupang.

It is interesting to note that a similar pattern of evenly distributed multiple burials can also be observed at Kaupang, in line with that of the Western Diaspora. Specifically, the disparate placement of a multiple burial mound each

at Søndre, Nordre and Lamøya certainly have the feel of intentionality, although the disturbed state of the Søndre and Nordre cemeteries, combined with the remaining number of burials yet to be excavated at all of these cemeteries, could be concealing further examples of which we are not yet aware. It is worth noting, too, in the light of the discussion regarding Balladoole above, that a number of burials at Bikjholberget disturbed previous graves seemingly unintentionally. In fact, a number of rearrangements of those interred in the boat burials here can be observed and, in one extraordinary case, the original inhumation of a woman in Ka.298-300 [G2074] was removed when disarticulated and placed as a pile of bones on a small shelf in the rock wall to the west of the burial proper.

To summarise, it seems clear that the majority of multiple burials made use of landscapes that may have already appeared significant due to the monuments and burials of local communities. In general, the burials that were placed within existing cemeteries integrated well with the original interments and created limited disturbance. This was also the case of ancient burial monuments used for subsequent Viking Age burials. Although many view the Balladoole burial's placement within an existing mortuary landscape as aggressively destructive, similar patterns of disturbance can be identified in the purely Viking Age cemeteries of Kaupang and Hedeby. Accordingly, it is possible that skeletal material— no matter its perceived cultural affiliation— may have become somewhat ontologically removed from the deceased's personhood in Viking Age minds sometime after burial, meaning that it may not be appropriate to evaluate such behaviour within the framework of corporeal and funerary 'respect' that prevails in current Western societies.

Multiple Burial Demographics

This section outlines the representation of sex, gender and age in multiple burials. Sex and gender are not uncontested and naturalised concepts in the Viking Age. Two major gender paradigms have formed the basis of archaeological interpretation during this period. The first concept holds that the recovery of weaponry signifies the burial of a 'man' while jewellery signifies the burial of a 'woman' (Sjøvold 1944; Hofseth 1999). The second is based upon the observation that far more sexed and gendered males are recovered in burials than sexed and gendered females, the reasons for which have been discussed at length elsewhere (see Sjøvold 1944; Petersen 1951; Dommasnes 1987; Hofseth 1999; Stylegar 2007, 2010; Moen 2010) but are generally thought to be a combination of factors, including:

- Variable rates of preservation regionally
- Predominance of amateur and antiquarian excavated graves for which osteological analysis of skeletal remains (where preserved) was not undertaken
- Gendering based on grave goods where male weaponry is more archaeologically visible due to size and material which is often better preserved than smaller, more delicate female equipment
- Changing associations with particular objects through time
- Differential burial practices for the sexes

One such proposal regarding this last item is the idea that men dominated the public sphere and women resided in the private sphere, causing the disparity of sex representation in the mortuary arena (Gansum 1995; Solberg 2006).

Contrary to these views, Moen has argued that this gender–binary has been inappropriately projected on to the archaeological record which, she suggests, may appear dominated by the representation of males due to our own methodological and conceptual biases which more readily 'recover' them (Moen 2010:11–12). As the focus of this thesis is not to pursue the resolution of this question of gender, I will leave this discussion here but with a final caveat; the figures used in this research were adopted from those outlined in individual excavation reports and regional synthesis, meaning they may incorporate much of the bias highlighted by Moen (2010). The discussion below should be read in relation to the current wider discourse on sex and gender in the Viking Age (Kristensen 2006, 2010; Back Danielsson 2007; Moen 2010, 2011; Croix 2012; Milek 2012; Mannering 2013; Hedenstierna-Jonson et al. 2017) and should be taken only as a first step towards understanding who was afforded a multiple burial during this period.

Individuals of all sexes, genders and ages are represented in multiple burials. The distribution of sex and age categories across different multiple burial configurations will be examined more thoroughly in the succeeding section, however it is important to first establish wider trends related to these categories as they appear in the database. Individuals for which a sex identity was obtained through osteological examination are referred to as 'sexed' individuals, whereas those for whom a determination was based on the grave goods with which they were associated are referred to as 'gendered' individuals. Although there are a host of problems inherent in using such generalized vocabulary (and, in general, adhering to a binary classification system which was probably as misrepresentative and insensitive in the Viking Age as it is today), these terms are used to demonstrate the degree of methodological accuracy— or inaccuracy— within the current dataset while also presenting a very generalized

breakdown of the multiple burial population in line with previous studies for purposes of comparison. The distribution of sexed and gendered individuals is shown in Table 4.

	Single Burial					Multiple Burial				
	Male	%	Female	%	Total	Male	%	Female	%	Total
Sexed	140	61	90	39	230 (11%)	56	67	27	33	83 (39%)
Gendered	175	69	79	31	254 (12%)	35	65	19	35	54 (25%)
Total	315	65	169	35	484 (23%)	91	66	46	34	137 (64%)

Table 4. Frequencies of sex/gender data by burial type. Data available for 23% (n=484) of SBs and 64% (n=137) of the individuals in MBs.

There are 2107 individuals represented in single burial however only just 11% of these have been osteologically sexed (n=230) and 12% have been gendered on the basis of grave goods (n=254). Conversely, sex and gender has been assigned to a far greater proportion of the individuals in multiple burials (n=83 or 39% and n= 54 or 25% respectively), probably due in large part to the rather rare opportunity they offer archaeologists to explore particular social and personal relationships in a secure and intentional burial context. Despite the different burial contexts from which they originate, it appears that remarkably little variation exists between the proportion of men and women included in both single and multiple burials.

While the proportional distribution of sex/gender does not seem to differ between the single and multiple burial data, there is a slight difference between the representation of different age groups (Table 5). The age data presented here has been standardised to osteological age band groupings, as outlined by Buikstra and Uberlaker (1994), broadly categorised into subadults (individuals aged 0-19 years) and adults (individuals aged 20 years and above)⁵. In general,

⁵ Further detail regarding age band groupings can be found in Appendix 2. Throughout the text, the term ‘juvenile’ is used synonymously with ‘subadult’.

adults are very much dominant in the burial dataset, but there are markedly fewer subadults in the multiple burials proportionally than there are in the single burials, which contain almost twice as many juveniles. This is even though over half of all individuals in multiple burials have been aged, compared to just 15% of those in single burials.

Age Group	Single Burial	%	Multiple Burial	%
Subadults	120	39	27	21
Adults	190	61	100	79
Total	310	100	127	100

Table 5. Frequencies of age data for SBs and MBs. Data unavailable for 85% ($n=1797$) of SBs and 40% ($n=87$) of individuals in MBs.

A break-down of the specific age groups that constitute these figures shows relatively little difference between the age profiles in single and multiple burials (Figure 9, for further detail see Appendix 2). Middle adults are similarly dominant in both burial types. While there appears to be a greater emphasis on the burial of younger adults and fewer older adults in multiple burials compared to these age groups in single burials, this is probably only a result of random variability. Random variability may also account for the greater proportion of older juveniles (aged between 3 and 12 years) in multiple burials than the single type but, without statistical testing, it is difficult to state with any certainty.

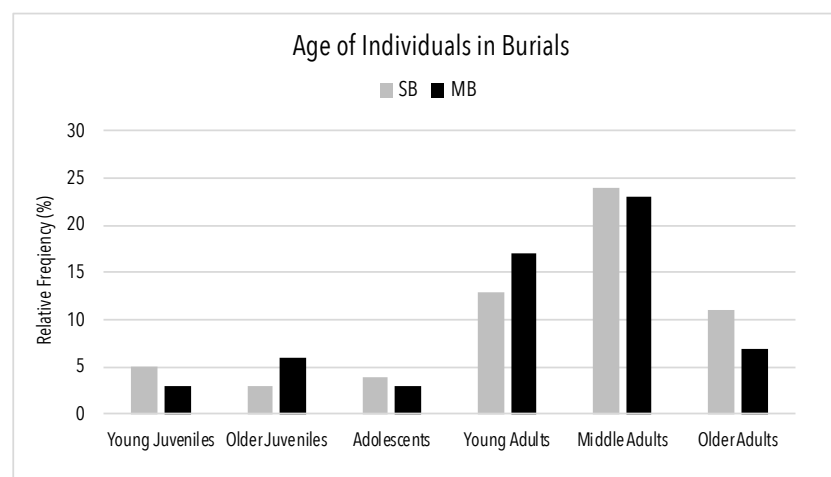


Figure 9. Relative frequencies of each age-band as recorded for MBs and SBs.

One may expect a greater number of older subadults to be found when more rigorous aging techniques are applied to the skeletal assemblage, as is the case with the multiple burials, but this increase may actually reflect ideas surrounding the purpose of some multiple burials, as demonstrated by the extraordinary quadruple burial at Repton [G192]. This burial contained four subadults— three older juveniles and an adolescent— of which at least two or three of the individuals showed evidence of trauma as cause of death, prompting some to categorise the deposit as ritual in nature (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2001:74; Jarman et al. 2018:4)

Further exploration of how this demographic is represented in different contexts may help to explain their increased occurrence in multiple burials, but on the whole, it seems that the age and sex/gender profiles of individuals does not differ whether they are interred in either single or multiple burials. In isolation, it seems that the identity categories of age and sex/gender did not govern the use of multiple burial, suggesting that other factors may have been more important. But do these ratios differ in relation to how many people are interred together in multiple burials, and what could this mean for the use and significance of particular configurations?

Number of Individuals

Generally, the greater the number of people contained within a multiple burial, the less frequently they are observed. Over three quarters of all multiple burials contain just two individuals and, while there are still a considerable number of triple burials in the corpus, multiple burials containing four or more people are relatively rare (Table 6).

Study Area	Double	Triple	Quadruple+
England	9	2	1
Mann	2	0	0
Scotland	8	2	0
Ireland	3	0	1
Iceland	14	3	1
Kaupang	22	1	2
Hedeby	13	6	1
Total	71	14	6

Table 6. Frequency of double, triple, and quadruple+ burials.

The prevalence of the double burial among the multiple burial dataset may be seen as one of the greatest contributing factors for the persistence of the master/slave and husband/wife interpretations that have previously dominated discussion of Viking Age multiple burials. We must look closer at the composition of double burials to ascertain whether these interpretations are adequate.

Double Burial

A total of 71 multiple burials contain just two individuals, accounting for over three quarters of the total corpus. The dominance of the double burial extends across all study areas, ranging from being the only type of multiple burial used in Mann and accounting for 88% of all multiple burials at Kaupang, to a much-reduced majority at Hedeby at 65%.

Sex/Gender	No.	Rel. Freq. (%)	Age	No.	Rel. Freq. (%)
MM	14	20	AA	19	27
MF	15	21	AS	13	18
FF	5	7	SS	0	0
MU	14	20	AU	6	8
FU	4	6	SU	2	3
UU	19	27	UU	31	44
Total	71	100	Total	71	100

Table 7. Frequencies of sex/gender and age combinations in double burials. M= male; F= female; U= unknown; A= adult (20≤); S= subadult (19≥).

Of the double burials, just 31 contained individuals for which sex or gender was able to be assigned (Table 7). In these cases, the greatest number of double burials contained a male and a female however male-male burials were also very common. Females are represented in very few double burials, except when they are interred with men. The frequency of all–adult double burials is on par with that of the adult–subadult combination but, remarkably, there are no all–subadult burials identified in the double burial data. The results discussed here should be considered with caution as the sex or gender for one or more individuals could not be ascertained for the majority of double burials (approximately 56%). This is even more pronounced in the age data, for which an even greater proportion (over 62%) of burials contained one or more individuals that could not be aged with any certainty.

Adult–Adult

Male–Female

The male–female double burials constitute over 20% of the total double burial data and, while all study areas are represented except for Ireland, the majority come from Iceland and Kaupang. Where age has been inferred, the sample consists only of adults and it is most likely this, in combination with the fact that they are the most commonly identified form of multiple burial, that has caused previous scholars to attribute husband and wife status to those interred.

Holck’s (1987:166) investigation of the Early and Late Iron Age cremation graves from Norway similarly found that the male–female double burial was by far the most common form of multiple burial in the sample. This is a finding echoed from loosely contemporaneous Saxon contexts in England, further indicating that the male-female double burial was underpinned by an essential social institution shared by the Late Iron Age and Early Medieval societies of the

region. Upon closer examination of the osteological ages of the male-female pairs in Holck's data, he found that the males were usually much older than the females they were interred with; on average, the males were aged 39 while the average age of their female counterparts was 26 years (1987:166). However, there were two exceptions where females were older than their male partners, and in a further two cases both individuals were of the same age (Holck 1987:166).

Unfortunately, this trend cannot be verified by the current sample as only five burials were given ages (Kroppur [G1768] and Surtstaðir [G1852] in Iceland; Ka.310/311 [G2082] from Kaupang and Gr.2/3 [G602] at Hedeby; and the Ballateare burial [G2012] in Mann). A further two were not specified beyond 'adult' (Balladoole [G2010] and Ka.286/287 [G2067] from Kaupang). However, it does seem that those in male-female double burials were interred at roughly the same age (Table 8).

Surtstaðir in Iceland is the only burial from this sample that appears to align with Holck's pattern of older males with relatively younger females. Here a middle-aged adult male was interred in a simple earth cut grave with a younger female. However, while there are some issues with the precision of the female's age, the two were not interred at the same time. The grave had been reopened at some point after the subsequent burial (evidenced by the pile of bones that were pushed to the side of the earth cut) but the lower section of the burial remained intact, showing that the female's legs had lain upon the legs of the earlier male. This suggested to the excavator, Jón Steffensen, that the burial was made over consecutive interments in which the female was added to the male's existing grave (Eldjárn & Friðriksson 2016:220). The time-lapse between the

interments is unknown so the relationship between the two individuals is obscured even further.

The temporal sequences of the Kroppur and Ka.310/311 burials are also unknown; the male and female at Kroppur were interred in their own earth cuts within the same mound, while the male and female at Kaupang were placed at opposite ends of the same boat.

		Age of Male		Age of Female	
G602	Hedeby Sch.2/3	20–24	Young Adult	20–34	Young Adult
G2012	Ballateare	18–30	Young Adult	20–30	Young Adult
G2010	Balladoole	20–50	Unspecified Adult	20–50	Unspecified Adult
G1852	Surtsstaðir	36–45	Middle Adult	18–25	Young Adult
G1768	Kroppur	35–49	Middle Adult	35–49	Middle Adult
G2067	Ka.286/287	20–50	Unspecified Adult	20–50	Unspecified Adult
G2082	Ka.310/311	35–49	Middle Adult	35–49	Middle Adult

Table 8. Ages of individuals in male–female double burials, where known.

It is probable that both individuals were around the same age in Gr.2/3 at Hedeby [G602] as they were both described as ‘early-adults’— taken to correspond to the age group ‘young adult’ spanning 20–34 years (Buikstra & Ubelaker 1994)— with the specification that the male was probably more narrowly aged between 20–24 years old (Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010).

The two individuals in the Ballateare burial [G2012] were also most probably contemporaries, although the female may also be a little older; she was aged 20–30 while her male companion was aged 18–30 years old. However, the structural form of both of these graves are considerably different to one another. The Ballateare burial is one of the most discussed burials from the Viking World for the possibility that the female was sacrificed to accompany a young male. The male was given a fairly standard burial in a coffin, however, the mound that was raised above him — topped with a layer of cremated animal bone, a platform and

wooden marker—was certainly monumental. If previous interpretations are correct, a female slave was deposited somewhat unceremoniously at the very top of the mound. This contrasts greatly with the manner in which the male and female were interred at Hedeby; they were buried in a single rectangular earth cut lined with a layer of brushwood. The two were buried in extended supine position quite close to one another (the female's upper body lay slightly upon the male's right arm) and they were both covered with another layer of brushwood (Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010).

The data does not appear to disagree with a modern western assumption that Viking Age individuals married partners of similar age. In this view, the male and female pairs in this research could represent spouses due to their similar ages. But, Holck and others (Benedictow 1985:51; Jochens 1995; Raffield et al. 2017:180) suggest that married males were older than their female partners. If this is so, this does not align with the collected data. However, with such a small sample size and in the absence of close osteological aging, it is difficult to draw any conclusions as to the relation of age and sex in these pairings.

It is worth noting, too, that these seemingly 'spousal' pairs could represent other social relationships articulated contextually, for example through differential bodily treatment and relational positioning, which just happen to take the same physiological form. For example, the two youngest burial pairings (Hedeby [G602] and Ballateare [G2012]) are similar in age-sex characteristics but the treatment of the Hedeby pair is intimate and careful, while apparently little care has been shown to the Ballateare woman. In this light, and without reinforcing existing stereotypes regarding husbands/wives and masters/slaves, the salient point is that while appearing the same, these two burials could not be more different contextually.

Male–Male Burials

The all-male double burials have proven difficult to interpret for previous scholars. Shetelig (1910:184) considered the male-male combination quite rare, and this was borne out by the figures presented by Holck, who found that no all-male double cremations existed amongst the 48 double burials in his sample (1987:166), a trend not shared by the Saxon data in England. However, the 14 all-male burials here suggest that these burials were not so rare an occurrence, especially when their frequency is compared to that of the most common form, the male-female combination.

All-male double burials account for 20% of the total in this sample which is more than twice as much as the Anglo-Saxon samples mentioned above. It is tempting to interpret this figure within a paradigm of warrior brotherhood advocated by Raffield and colleagues, which has already been discussed in Chapter Two. In this view, the all-male multiple burial pairs could represent the casualties of Scandinavian colonisation, initiated by the operation of a highly militarised society in which warrior-ingroup identification was a core component. From this perspective, it would seem appropriate for members of the same warrior band to be buried together, and this seems borne out by some of the all-male double burials from the Western Diaspora in this sample. They contain young adult males along with middle to older adult males, possibly representing warrior lords (*dróttinn*) with young men (*drengjar* or *væbner*) in their retinue (*hirð* or *lið*) (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2001:65; Brink 2012:54; Raffield et al. 2015:42, 2017:321).

Just over half of the all-male double burials were found in the West; two in Scotland (Dunrobin [G2276] and Westness [G2360]), three in England (Repton [G194] and [G196], and Sonning [G206]), and two in Iceland

(Hafurbjarnarstaðir [G1702] and Kaldárhöfði [G1746]). The English examples have all previously been interpreted as casualties incurred during conflict with Saxon bands, being located in areas that correspond to the documented movement of the Great Army during the ninth century. All of these burials seem to contain individuals of the appropriate age groups (Table 9). The two individuals in one of the Repton graves [G196] appear to have sustained fatal wounds from battle; the 17 to 20-year-old may have died from a blade injury to his head, while the middle-aged man with whom he was interred showed extensive trauma (including castration and disembowelment). Recent paleogenetic testing has revealed that these two men are maternally related, causing some to suggest that this was the warrior king of Dublin and his warrior son (Jarman 2019). A biological relationship cannot be stated for the other Repton grave [G194] that contained a man of 50 years with a 20-year-old male, or that at Sonning that contained two 20-year-olds, due to lack of available osteological information.

One of the individuals in the Westness burial in Scotland did show evidence of (potential) torture-related trauma which could be related to conflict, however, the burial cannot be dated any more closely than to the 'Viking Age' generally, and his 20- to 30-year-old companion showed no sign of trauma. Of course, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, but without further detail this cannot be ascertained. Moreover, the Dunrobin Castle cist burial, containing two adults of unspecified age, seems to have been made over consecutive interments intervened by a great many years. That is not to say that contemporaneity is a decisive factor in potential *lið* burials, as the men at Repton [G196] were interred consecutively over the course of what may have been only a few days or weeks. However, one would expect that a shorter period of time, perhaps the duration of a particular campaign in a specific geographical area, would be more common.

The burial sequence of the Kaldárhöfði burial in Iceland is unknown; it contained the remains of a young boy of 7 or 8 years of age with an unspecified adult male in a boat on the shores of Lake Ulfljótuvatn. No skeletal trauma was identified and the two were buried with a range of fishing equipment and standard weaponry, which does not appear to be conflict related.

The remaining all-male double burials originate from Kaupang, and all of these have been gendered rather than sexed [G2051, G2072, G2075, G2087 and G2219]. For three of these burials very little contextual information is available and there are issues of age and association for the two that do.

		Age of Male 1		Age of Male 2	
G206	Sonning	20	Young Adult	20	Young Adult
G194	Repton 83/84	50	Older Adult	20	Young Adult
G196	Repton 295/511	34–45	Middle Adult	17–20	Adolescent
G2276	Dunrobin Castle	20–50	Unspecified Adult	20–50	Unspecified Adult
G2360	Westness 2A/2B	35–55	Middle Adult	20–30	Young Adult
G1620	Brandsstaðir	20–50	Unspecified Adult	20–50	Unspecified Adult
G1702	Hafurbjarnarstaðir	36–45	Middle Adult	13–19	Adolescent
G1746	Kaldárhöfði	20–50	Unspecified Adult	7–8	Older Juvenile
G2087	Ka.316/317	20–50	Unspecified Adult	0–19	Unspecified Juvenile

Table 9. Ages of individuals in male–male double burials, where known. Adult–Subadult burials (G1746 and G2087) given for comparison.

The Kaupang burial (Ka.316/317 [G2087]) was made over consecutive interments in the same domestic storage chest in Bikjholberget. The first interment was that of a young boy of unspecified youth whose burial was later reopened for the interment of an unspecified adult male who had been dismembered. Although both inhumations are of a similar date, the initial placement of a child and the subsequent addition of a maimed male does not seem suggestive of warrior brothers. An alternate interpretation of this burial is supported by the fact that it was accompanied by a single horse grave

immediately to its south that contained a decapitated horse. It is unclear whether the horse was deposited at the same time as the child or the adult, but there might be something in the shared dismemberment of the horse and adult male which links the two together.

The configuration of the other burial for which there are details, Ka.292/293 [G2072] also appears to support an alternate interpretation. The original inhumation was that of a male of unknown age who was laid in a simple earth cut grave around the year AD 800. One hundred years or so later (AD 900–950), a male of 30 years of age was interred in a boat above the original male burial, oriented the same direction and only obscuring the upper portion of his grave. Located immediately north of this burial is another boat burial [G2073] that uses the same vertical configuration, suggesting that some other practice may motivate this particular arrangement, and they will be examined together in the ‘Temporal Relations’ section of this chapter (p.115).

The majority of the all-male double burials are not constituted of individuals of the same age (Table 9). Instead, there seems to be an emphasis on the pairing of middle adults with younger men ranging from later childhood to young adulthood. As only three burials have military connotations, it is possible that older males still held an important role in mentoring younger males, possibly in a father-son or wider kin capacity, but also possibly in other contexts like training and apprenticeship.

Female–Female Burials

Female-female burials are slightly more common than female-unknown burials. In general though, it appears that females are underrepresented in the double burial data; only five burials were found to contain two females, and a further

four contained females with individuals of unknown sex/gender (compared to the 16 male-unknown burials mentioned above). The dearth of females follows the general under-representation of women in the mortuary record (Sofaer Derevenski 1994; Sellevold 1997; Callow 2006:58–59; Stylegar 2007:86; Squires 2014; McGuire 2019:16). In contrast, while children likewise make up a minor proportion of the corpus, they appear in almost half of all double burials for which age could be assigned.

The small proportion of all-female burials from the Viking Age, combined with the lack of contextual detail available for these specific burials, makes it very difficult to interpret whether this form of double burial really was as rare an occurrence in the Viking World as the data suggests, and its place amongst the other multiple burial practices already discussed. All of the female-female double burials in this data were found at Kaupang [G2044; G2063; G2066; G2076 and G2139] and, due to the poor level of bone preservation observed at the site, their classification as female has been established using gendered grave goods, rather than osteological sex. As a result, there is very little associated data related to other aspects of their biological identity, such as age and pathology, from which we can contextualise this burial practice. But there are other lines of evidence that may provide clues as to the position of these women in relation to one another and to society in general. A number of characteristics are shared by the women in this double burial configuration (Table 10). All of the burials were:

- Found at Kaupang
- Made over consecutive interments
- Interred in substantial burial structures
- Furnished with objects of foreign influence or origin

- Furnished with weapons and brooches⁶

It is interesting to note that none of the all-female double burials come from the lands of the Viking diaspora. All of these burials are found in the cemeteries of Kaupang, which brings with it its own special context.

Burial	Structure	Weapons	Amulets	Brooches	Foreign Influences	Dates
Ka.253 [G2044]	Boat	Arrow; Shield		3	Insular	Both AD 800-900
Ka.280/281[G2063]	Chamber	Arrow; Axe			Eastern; Finnish; Slavic	Both AD 900-1000
Ka.284/285 [G2066]	Boat	Axe x 3		4	Western Continental	Both AD 900-950
Ka.303/304 [G2076]	Boat	Arrow; Axe	Egg-shaped stone	3	Frankish; Western Continental; Insular	AD 800-850 AD 875-900
Ka.400/401 [G2139]	Mound	Axe		3	Western Continental	AD 800-900 AD 900-1000

Table 10. Shared traits of the all-female double burials found at Kaupang.

A number of studies have made clear that many of the richest burials from the Viking Age occur in connection with wealthy, long-established, productive settlements that have heritage significance and are of regional importance, and this seems to be the case in the context of Kaupang (Dommasnes 1979; Stylegar 2010; Sørheim 2011). While most burials at Kaupang were made in mounds or boats, the use of these major burial structures for the all-female burials indicates they were of a certain social standing. Three of the all-female pairs were interred in boats, while one burial was made within a mound, and the other made in what could be a wooden chamber covered by a stone setting. There are very few chambers in Kaupang— one certain chamber [G2056] and this possible example [G2063]— and Stylegar is of the opinion that they are a supra-regional tradition of clear aristocratic character (2007:92).

⁶ Except in the case of Ka.280/281 [G2063], in which both women were not associated with oval brooches. This has been taken to signify that these women were foreigners, perhaps of Eastern origin (Blindheim et al. 1999:45–46).

Aannestad & Glørstad (2017) have made a similar case for the significance of the boat in funerary rituals, noting that the women in these contexts were usually equipped with brooches and other jewellery items, but also with objects more commonly associated with men, like axes, arrows and shields, and other items of a more ambiguous nature which may have served as amulets (Aannestad & Glørstad 2017:162). Scholars of the Viking Age have long recognised the symbolic qualities encapsulated by oval brooches in relation to social structure and the life course (e.g. Solberg 1985; Hayeur-Smith 2003). In particular, Solberg (1985) has linked the more numerous presence of oval brooches (and weapons) in particular burials with prosperous, land-owning individuals of a particular social stratum. Solberg has stressed that this was not the highest stratum of society, but consisted of wealthy individuals who were far less numerous than the lowest social tier of free individuals (Solberg 1985:74).

Although the relationship between material culture and social structure is far more complex than a simple positive correlation suggests (where an increase in one variable always results in the increase of the other), it does provide a starting point from which to consider the nature of these all-female burials. Does the increased occurrence of jewellery and weapons in these burials indicate that the women buried together at Kaupang were either land holders or homesteaders of considerable social standing? It is impossible to establish this with any certainty but, when considered in combination with interpretations regarding the connection between domestic settlement and supernatural power offered by Price (2019) and Gardela (2016), the discussion becomes far more intriguing.

Furthermore, the burial assemblages belonging to these females— rich with jewellery, weaponry and amulets— could be related to the practice of *seiðr*. Price

(2019) has demonstrated how the identity of *seiðr* practitioners (and the performance of *seiðr* itself) was located both at ‘society’s moral and psychological borders’ and woven into the practices of everyday life and the domestic sphere. While *seiðr* could have violent and destructive consequences for Viking Age individuals, it could also bestow good fortune on the household by ensuring healthy crops, attracting game-animals or fish, and changing the weather (Price 2019:171,185).

In particular, Gardeła has identified numerous material metaphors at work in the Viking Age homestead that bring a sacred dimension to seemingly ‘mundane’ objects. For example, spindle whorls, distaffs and looms resemble tools of the *seiðr* trade which further embed *seiðr* in domestic practices through the imagery of spinning and weaving (2016:70–72). In this way, there may be a close association with the domestic sphere and ritual practice. This may be reflected in the ritual deposition of artefacts in the house, where spindle whorls and other quotidian artefacts are common, and entwinements between female life experience, ritual practice, and cross-temporal concerns have been argued (Eriksen 2019:163–176).

The temporal dimension of these burials is significant, being formed by consecutive interments over the course of 100 or 200 years. This suggests that the females in these double burials were conceptualised as having a shared temporal identity and that this form of burial served as intergenerational repositories for such women. In the absence of parallels from the Western Diaspora or Hedeby, it may be that these females were of special significance in very localised circumstances. Further exploration of burials with similar archaeological signatures is needed to establish this possible trend on a wider setting.

Burials Containing Individuals of Unknown Sex and Age

In total, 18 multiple burials contained only one individual who could be identified. In 14 of these cases the individual was male while in only four burials was the individual identified as female. All of these females were classified using osteological sex, while the males were classified by both sex (n=6) and gender (n=8) in fairly equal measure. In each of the four female-unknown burials, the second individual was a juvenile, however, the male-unknown burials cannot be explained in the same way, as only three are thought to have contained children. A good example of this is Kaupang burial Ka.262 [G2050] in which the skeletal remains of a male of unspecified age (presumably, but not definitely, an adult from the grave plan) also contained the remains of a child.

A further three burials appear to be males interred with other adults of unknown sex, but the rest remain unknown, presenting a real challenge in interpreting these graves. It may be that the co-burial of children is executed differently when the sex or gender of the adult with whom they are interred differs.

Adult-Subadult Burials

Subadults are found with sexed females and sexed males in roughly equal numbers, however they are not found with gendered females as they are gendered males, resulting in an ostensible preference for the deposition of subadults with male adults (Table 11). However, it must be noted that three of these male-subadult burials contain adolescents (Hafurbjarnarstaðir [G1702], Ytri-Neslönd [G1901] and Repton 295/511 [G196]) who, while considered by many osteoarchaeologists to be subadult, could have already reached a 'cultural

age’ of manhood in the eyes of their communities.⁷ Nevertheless, there are still four definite male-subadult burials that contain adult males mostly in their mid-thirties coupled with juveniles between six to eight years old.

Females interred with subadults are usually in their early thirties, i.e. roughly the same age as their male counterparts; the children with whom they are interred are either the same age or younger than the children interred with males. Twelve of the 13 subadults found in double burials are interred with adults, and in no cases were subadults buried with other subadults. This may suggest that personhood for children was very much defined relationally with adults.

Age of Adult					Age of Subadult		
G162	Heath Wood 50	18–45	Unspec. Adult	F	0–2	Young Juvenile	U
G204	Sedgeford	30	Young Adult	F	0–12	Unspec. Juvenile	U
G196	Repton 295/511	34–45	Middle Adult	M	17–20	Adolescent	M
G2388	Westness 1A	30	Young Adult	F	neonate	Young Juvenile	U
G1935	Islandbridge 1860	20–40	Young Adult	M	0–12	Unspec. Juvenile	U
G1746	Kaldárhöfði	20–50	Unspec. Adult	M*	7–8	Older Juvenile	M*
G1702	Hafurbjarnarstaðir	36–45	Middle Adult	M	13–19	Adolescent	M*
G1901	Ytri-Neslönd	20–50	Unspec. Adult	M	13–19	Adolescent	U
G2054	Ka.268	40–50	Middle Adult	F	0–12	Unspec. Juvenile	U
G2057	Ka.272	20–50	Unspec. Adult	M	0–12	Unspec. Juvenile	U
G2087	Ka.316/317	20–50	Unspec. Adult	M	0–12	Unspec. Juvenile	U
G266	Hedeby 6/7	20–50	Unspec. Adult	U	0–12	Unspec. Juvenile	U
G344	Hedeby 83	20–50	Unspec. Adult	U	5–14	Older Juvenile	U

Table 11. Age combination in double burials with sex/gender included where known. Asterisk denotes gender determination in the absence of osteological sex.

In addition, it is important to note that this does not negate the agency of children during this period as it has already been established that powerful children (and children with powerful qualities) can be found in the

⁷ These three burials containing adolescents have been included in the figures for all-male adult double burials illustrated in Table 9 on page 80.

archaeological record (Lillehammer 2016; Eriksen 2017). This may be the case for the only subadult found with an individual of unknown age in this research. This particular burial, at Ingiríðarstaðir [G1737], is quite unique. Here, a neonate was found in a small earth cut grave that was positioned at the base of a peculiar turf wall. Approximately a meter to its south, another pit had been dug under the turf wall containing a human leg bone, two pieces of a human cranium along with an assortment of animal bone (cattle, caprine and pig) and topped with the wholly-articulated skeleton of a cat (Leifsson 2018:192). The skull fragments were placed near the cat and showed evidence of blunt force trauma that caused death. The rest of the pit was filled and covered with large stones.

There is great diversity in the composition of double burials in that they contain individuals of all ages, sexes, and genders, across many different configurations. At this point, it is challenging to come to an overall picture of this type of burial. However, perhaps this is the point? Discussion of mothers and infants, masters and slaves, and husbands and wives has overshadowed the exceptionally diverse relations that occur in these contexts and it is only through close contextual examination that the obscured persons in these burials start to materialise in sharper focus.

Triple Burials

There are 14 burials containing three individuals, and while triple burials are much less frequent than the double burial type, they still constitute a considerable 15% the total multiple burial data set. Most of these come from Hedeby (n=6), however three examples are found in Iceland, two in Scotland and England, and just one at Kaupang (see Appendix 6). Thus, triple burial was

not practiced universally across the Western region and was used with varied frequency across the Scandinavian sample.

Overall, children and older subadults are rare in triple burials. Only 30 of the total 42 individuals represented in triple burials could be assigned an age, equating to 12 of the 14 burials. Of this number, just two burials contained juveniles which is almost half the proportion of subadults represented in double burials (32.5%) discussed above and shown below (Table 12). This may suggest that the context of both double and triple burials held different connotations for communities when it came to deciding how to inter recently deceased children.

MB Type	Sex/Gender (Male : Female)		Age (Adult : Subadult)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Double	56 : 29	66 : 34	55 : 15	79 : 21
Triple	23 : 11	68 : 32	28 : 2	93 : 7
Quadruple	5 : 2	71 : 29	7 : 7	50 : 50
Quintuple	2 : 2	50 : 50	4 : 1	80 : 20
Septuple	4 : 2	66 : 33	5 : 2	71 : 29

Table 12. Frequencies of sex/gender and age as they occur across types of multiple burial.

Of the large proportion of adults exhibited in this class of multiple burial, the majority were able to be assigned a narrower age banding (n=26), showing that there is a slight preference for the triple interment of middle adults (35 to 50 years old at time of death). While this probably is to be expected considering life expectancy estimates for this period average around 35 to 38 years of age (Sellevold et al. 1984:207–208; Holck 1987:104; Stylegar 2007:86), it might be that the triple burial was conceived as more appropriate for mature adults. Apart from the substantial variation of age distribution, there is also a marked variation in sex that favours males in triple burials. In fact, there are no triple burials that do not include at least one male. Of those assigned a sex or gender classification

(n=27), almost three quarters were classed as male, with just seven females represented in total (Table 13).

The triple burials were made using a wide variety of structural elements, although all interments were inhumations. Most of the triple burials were composed of either plain earth cuts or cuts containing coffins (n=6), however other more major structures used include mounds (n=3), boats (n=3), and a chamber. Like the double burials, the majority of triples used the same context for each interment (n=9) and were made predominantly over successive interments.

	MMM	Ages (group)		MMM	Ages (group)
G126	Cambois	OA; MA; YA	G1052	Hedeby Boat Chamber	U; U; U
G2047	Ka.257-259	UA; UA; MA	G1837	Staðartunga	MA; MA; MA
G428	Gr.166-168	OA; UA; UA	G262	Gr.2	UA; UA; YA
G1795	Litlu-Núpar	MA; MA; U			
	MFU	Ages (group)		FFM	Ages (group)
G102	Aspatria	UA; U; U	G1718	Hrafnstaðir	MA; MA; UA
G2342	Scar	OA; YA; OJ	G2260	Càrn a' Bharraich	OA; OA; U
G386	Gr.124A/B	UA; UA; U			

Table 13. Sex and age combinations of individuals within triple burials (where at least one individual could be aged). For age band information see Appendix 2.

Where exact positions of specific graves were recorded, it is possible to designate some of the burials by their placement of the dead in a horizontal or vertical alignment. It appears that most triple burials use horizontal positioning to organize the deceased (n=5). Only in two cases— both at Hedeby [G356 and G428]— were three individuals interred vertically in the same grave cut. In three cases, the occupants were placed in both vertical and horizontal alignments. This is quite usual in mounds, where most individuals are not interred in the same context. Viking Age mounds seem to contain individual graves placed at many

different levels and sporadically across the horizontal plane. In another three cases it was not possible to tell in what alignment they had been arranged because of mixing of the bones, presumably when the burials were reopened to either inter the next individual or perform some other ritual practice. Interestingly, none of the individuals interred in triple burials showed any recorded trauma, incurred either in life or as a cause of death.

In summary, many of the triple burial attributes are similar to those encountered in double burials, however the limited representation of subadults and the absence of any trauma and pathology gives these burials a relatively nondescript character in comparison to the doubles and, as we will see, burials containing four or more people.

Quadruple+ Burials

In this dataset, very few graves contain more than three individuals; there are four quadruple burials, two quintuple burials and a single septuple burial (Table 14).

	Quadruple	Sex/Gender	Ages (group)
G1913	Cloghermore	MMUU	MA; UA; YJ; OJ
G345	Hedeby 84	FMUU	UA; UA; UA; U
G2074	Ka.298-300	FMMU	UA; OA; U; UJ
G192	Repton	UUUU	Ad; OJ; OJ; OJ
	Quintuple	Sex/Gender	Ages (group)
G2073	Ka.294-297	FFMMU	MA; UA; UA; UA; UJ
	Septuple	Sex/Gender	Ages (group)
G1884	Vatnsdalur	FFMMMMU	MA; YA; MA; YA; YA; Ad

Table 14. Individuals in MBs containing four or more people.

These six burials make up just 8% of the total multiple burial corpus and are distributed evenly across the study areas. Kaupang and Iceland are home to the largest groups, providing a quintuple boat burial at Bikjholberget (Ka.294-297 [G2073]) and a septuple boat burial at Vatnsdalur [G1884]. One each of the four quadruple burials are found in Ireland (Cloghermore Cave [G1913]), England (Repton [G192]), and at Kaupang (Ka.298-300 [G2074]) and Hedeby (Gr.84 [G345])

A total of 33 individuals are represented in these burials, and details relating to sex/gender and age are available for the majority. Where sex/gender is known (n=20), thirteen are classed as male (67%) and seven are classed as female (35%). These figures are remarkably similar to the relative frequencies exhibited in the double and triple burials. However, the age profile of the quadruple+ burial type is quite different from that of the other forms of multiple burials (Table 14). We have already seen that the triple burial demonstrates a clear preference for middle to older adults while the double burials seem to favour young to middle adults. However, the data in Figure 10 shows that individuals from all age groups are relatively evenly represented in quadruple+ burials except for older adults

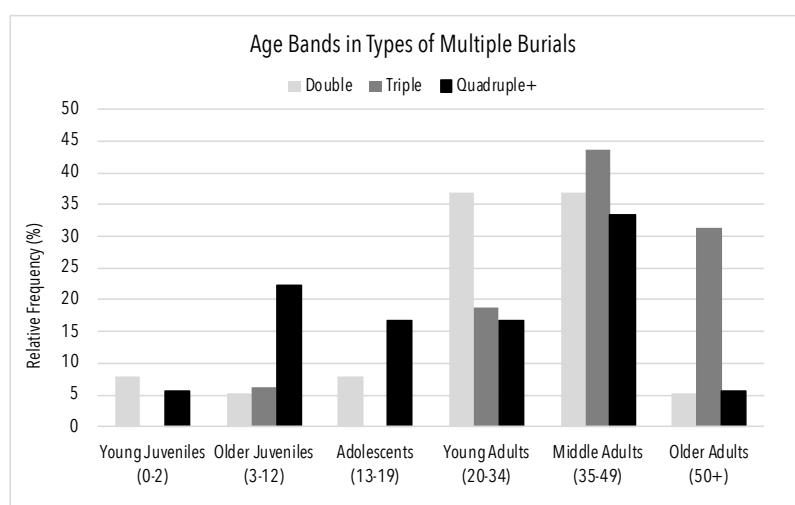


Figure 10. Relative frequency of age groups in relation to each type of MB.

Notably, subadults appear in all but two of these burials, and even more remarkably, as many as two or more are found in three burials. Furthermore, even fewer subadults are recovered in triple burials, which makes the inclusion of children in the majority of quadruple+ burials (often beyond just a single representative) particularly meaningful, suggesting that the intergenerational nature of this group was a core underlying principle.

The group is formed predominantly by consecutive interments (n=4) as might be expected, although the quadruple burial of subadults at Repton [G192] appears to have been made contemporaneously, while the burial of a man at Cloghermore Cave [G1913] is classed as antecedent due its inclusion of the remains of earlier native Irish individuals. This group of multiple burials also contains the quirkiest and most complex of Viking Age burials in the corpus—Ka.298–300 [G2074] from Bjørholmen in Kaupang— where the remains of four individuals were inhumed in a single boat.

This burial demonstrates a considerable depth of time in its construction, starting with an adult female who was inhumed in the boat circa AD 800-850. A number of years later, perhaps around AD 850-950, a male of unknown age (probably an adult) was also inhumed in the boat. Amongst his grave goods was a sword which has been broken into pieces and stacked one on top of the other. Either at this time or after a further two individuals were inhumed in the same boat, the remains of the initial female (grave one) were collected up in a disarticulated state and placed carefully on a rock shelf located immediately to the west of the boat, which has been placed at the foot of a rocky outcrop. The further two inhumations (graves three and four) are placed at the other end of the boat from the first male (grave two) sometime during the tenth century. One was an adult male aged about 50 years old, who had been dismembered and

placed in a pile somewhat out of anatomical order. With his body was placed a child who had been inhumed. This is certainly an intriguing burial, but it is certainly not the only example from this group that exhibits dismemberment, trauma, and complex spatial and temporal configurations.

The spatial composition of the Quadruple+ group of burials is one of extremes; in some cases, the burials are structurally quite simple while others are elaborate and complicated. For example, the Vatnsdalur boat burial [G1884] in Iceland is seemingly straightforward. Here, a boat 6m in length was dug into a sand dune on the shore of Patreksfjörður and covered with a layer of stone. The boat was made for the inhumation of a female, who was later joined by a further six individuals and a dog. While the sequence and arrangement of the inhumations may have been complex, this information was not observed upon its discovery, so any further detail of elaboration is lost. Similarly straightforward is the probable killing of three older juveniles and an adolescent at Repton [G192]. These children were all inhumed in a simple earth cut grave that was topped with a wooden marker held in place by a rectangle of stones. They were given no grave goods other than a single sheep's jaw placed at their feet.

In contrast, Ka.294-297 [G2073] is considerably complex. Here, an adult man was inhumed on his side, with his chest pressed against a boulder and equipped with a knife, in a simple earth cut grave made sometime in the early ninth century. Many years later in the later ninth century, a 10m long boat was pulled into position above him but following the NE-SW alignment of his grave. At the steering oar, a woman was inhumed in a seated position with the decapitated head of a dog in a bronze bowl in her lap and the rest of its carved carcass at her feet. It is unclear whether the dismembered and decapitated horse that was placed next to the dog towards midships was inhumed at the time of the female

or sometime during the tenth century when a further three individuals were inhumed. These later interments saw the placement of an adult male in the middle of the boat and a 45-50-year-old woman with an infant in the boat's far end. The whole burial was covered by a layer of stone packing and a rectangular stone setting, but at what time these features were constructed over the life span of the burial is unknown.

The diversity of the quadruple+ burial group is not really observed in any other form of multiple burial. In a spatial sense, the majority of the graves within each burial were made over varying periods of time, sometimes using the same context for all individuals, while in others using different tangible and intangible structures to make spatial and temporal connections. An example of which is the extension of the burial space in Kaupang (Ka.298–300 [G2074]) through both horizontal and vertical planes to incorporate the rock wall shelf into the overall burial structure.

But intangible connections are at work in these burials too. The other Kaupang example discussed above (Ka.297–297 [G2073]) used an intangible vertical spatial alignment (of the original grave to guide the placement of the later boat burial) to create an extended temporal dimension invisible to all but those who had intimate and prolonged knowledge of the burial rituals.

Spatial Relations

The explorations of the different forms of multiple burials above demonstrate that a number of spatial and material strategies were used in multiple burials to articulate a diverse range of relationships between those interred. To explore the spatial and material dimensions of these burials further, we need to situate them within their local context of mortuary practice. The discussion below focuses

mainly on multiple burials, but further detail pertaining to modes of single burial relevant to each study area can be found in Appendix 3.

England

There are clear structural differences between single and multiple burials in England. English single burials are predominantly simple earth cut graves, or cuts incorporating additional internal features (e.g. coffins, biers), while only 12% are made within mounds. Conversely, multiple burials show a greater preference for mounds (50%) and, when flat earth graves are used, an inclination for elaborating the burials above-ground (e.g. post markers) rather than with internal structures. Thus, it appears that visibility is a core feature of English multiple burials.

Table 15 plots the relationship between time, space and structures used in multiple burials in England. Unfortunately, the temporal relationship between interments in the Cambois [G126], Santon Downham [G202] and Hook Norton [G167] burials cannot be established, however there does seem to be a correlation between the temporality and structure type for the remaining burials in the sample. Obviously, the antecedent burials make use of the prehistoric mounds located at Aspatria [G102], Claughton Hall [G134] and Sandford Moor [G201], which differs in most respects from the flat graves used in the contemporary and consecutive interments that occur only within the Viking Age. However, there is a preference in these burials for using the same context for all those interred or using the same form of grave for those who are interred in separate contexts, as observed at Repton in the use of dual coffins [G194] or dual earth cuts [G196].

	Same Context	Different Contexts	Different Structures	Unknown
Contemporary	Heath Wood [mound/crem(L)] Repton [pm+set/ec] Sonning [fg/ec]	Repton [fg/coff+coff]		
Consecutive	Sedgeford [fg/ec]	Repton [pm+set/ec+ec]		
Antecedent		Aspatria [mound/cist+ec+?] Claughton Hall [mound/crem(U)+chest] Sandford Moor [mound/crem(U)+crem(L)]		
Unknown	Cambois [mound/cist] Santon Downham [fg/ec]	Hook Norton [mound/ec+ec]		

Table 15. English MBs plotted by temporal sequence and spatial configuration showing structural composition in the format [structural elements / context in which remains were found]. See end of Appendix 3 for abbreviations.

Conversely, in the antecedent burials, never are the Viking Age additions inserted in the same context as the original prehistoric interment, nor do they use the same form of burial. For example, at Claughton Hall [G134], the Viking Age inhumation was made in a wooden chest or chamber, kept separate from the earlier Bronze Age cremation urn. This suggests that an important element of the few antecedent Viking Age burials made in England was to maintain some distance from the original inhabitants of the mound, while attempting to capitalise on the temporal aspects of these landscape features.

Mann

A third of all single burial records for Mann lack structural detail, so it is difficult to come to any interpretive position based on such incomplete data. However, over half of the burials for which structure and context is known are flat graves, of either plain form or containing internal features. While none of these single burials are marked above ground, mounds are used quite frequently (unlike all other study areas in this research). There is perhaps little that can be said regarding the general patterns of construction for the multiple burials of Mann as there are only two in the entire corpus: Balladoole [G2010] and Ballateare [G2012] (Table 16). However, thanks to the excellent excavation and recording of these two graves by Gerhard Bersu in the mid-1940s, there is much to say about the complexity of their form and the burial rituals of which they are a product.

While the funerary rituals that formed these two multiple burials might have been quite dissimilar, they share a number of physical traits. Both burials contain two individuals (a male and a female) placed in the same context in the Balladoole burial and different contexts in the Ballateare burial. They may also

have looked visually alike in the landscape, being similarly constructed using mounds with associated post-markers. Although the temporal sequence of interments cannot be ascertained for the Balladoole burial, it is also possible that both burials were each the product of a single funerary event.

	Same Context	Different Contexts	Different Structures	Unknown
Contemporary		Ballateare [mound+pm/ coff+platform]		
Consecutive				
Antecedent				
Unknown	Balladoole [mound+pm/ boat]			

Table 16. Manx MBs plotted by temporal sequence and spatial configuration showing structural composition. See end of Appendix 3 for abbreviations.

While it must be acknowledged that making inferences about greater trends based on only two graves is problematic, it could be argued that multiple burials may only have been used by the Scandinavian communities of Mann in cases of simultaneous burial of two individuals. It may also be significant that the only two burials that currently exist were not reopened throughout the course of the Viking Age to add subsequent individuals and were purposefully made in landscapes already used for prehistoric mortuary behaviour. In fact, the remains of two other individuals were found with the man and woman in the Balladoole context, however, these were argued to have been intrusive. While this is the interpretation followed in this research, there is a possibility that the Norse community did, in fact, intend for these earlier individuals to contribute to the burial in some capacity in the same manner as did the pre-Viking Age individuals in mainland Britain.

Scotland

There are definite structural differences between single burials and multiple burials in Scotland. The majority of single burials make use of flat graves in the form of simple earth cuts or cuts containing additional features. Interestingly, the use of mounds for single burial is much more common in Scotland than in England, with almost a third of all single burials occurring within mounds.

The multiple burials of Scotland show a marked link between context use and temporality (Table 17). There is far less emphasis on timeliness in the Scottish corpus as there is in the English examples discussed above. Only one burial is classed as contemporaneous (the possible childbirth-related death of a woman and a neonate at Westness [G2388]) while the rest of the corpus is split evenly between the consecutive type (n=4) and antecedent types (n=4). The Viking Age graves inserted into the antecedent mounds are never placed in the same context as the original mound dweller, giving the appearance that differentiation was an important element in their construction.

There is also a correlation between the type of temporal character of the burials and the choice of inhumation or cremation. All of the contemporary and consecutive burials are inhumations, while all of the antecedent burials are cremations, echoing the treatment of the deceased for whom these mounds were originally made. This differential use of rite type is remarkable as, although Scotland has the greatest percentage of cremations within multiple burials of the whole Western Diaspora, inhumation is by far the most dominant rite used in multiple burials throughout the wider Viking World. For all of the Scottish multiple burial cremations to have occurred in an antecedent context suggests that emulation played a significant role in the ontologies underpinning their use. Furthermore, these burials all employ a degree of imitation in their use of

structural form; at Tote Skeabost [G2358] the Viking Age cremation was deposited in a loose spread, as was the earlier loose prehistoric cremation deposit, while at Stenness [G2350] the original prehistoric cremation deposit was urned and placed in a stone cist in the middle of the mound, which was later echoed by the creation of a second cist in which a possible Viking Age urned cremation was deposited with a whetstone and blue glass bead.

While there is not complete uniformity— the Finstown [G2278] Viking Age cremation was urned rather than spread loose like the prehistoric cremation—and there are provenancing issues involved in the categorisation of the Stenness and Finstown burials (see Appendix 5 for further detail), it does suggest that burial rite and material structure were important factors in linking the deceased's personhood with that of the prehistoric individuals with whom they were interred. In this way, the multiple burial rite in Scotland appears to embrace a much deeper temporal dimension than those in the English corpus, which may intimate that these communities held a longer-term view of the constitution of identity in death and used multiple burials to communicate this perspective.

	Same Context	Different Contexts	Different Structures	Unknown
Contemporary	Westness 1A [fg/ec]			
Consecutive	Westness 2A/2B [fg/ec]			
	Scar [fg/boat]			
	Dunrobin [fg/cist]			
	Cárn a'Bharraich [mound+stand+stand/boat]			
Antecedent		Finstown [mound/cisted crem(L)+crem(U)]		
		Housegord [mound/crem(U)+?]		
		Stenness [Mound/cisted crem(U)+cisted crem(U)]		
		Tote Skeabost [Mound+cairn/cisted crem(L)+crem(L)]		
Unknown				Ardvonrig [mound+set/ec+?]

Table 17. Scottish MBs plotted by temporal sequence and spatial configuration showing structural composition. See end of Appendix 3 for abbreviations.

Ireland

The Irish corpus is, simultaneously, largely homogenous yet idiosyncratically quirky. No other study area, save Hedeby, demonstrates such a commitment to flat earth cut graves, making up 88% of Ireland's single burial corpus. However, it is in the multiple burial record that a number of peculiarities begin to emerge. There are only four graves which are considered to be multiple burials in Ireland— Islandbridge 1860 [G1935], Church Bay [G1911], Cloghermore [G1913] and Croghan Erin [G1919]— and all of these are incredibly different to one another in terms of composition.

The only burial that contains remains of purely Viking Age date is that of Islandbridge [G1935], where a plain earth cut grave was found to contain a Viking Age male inhumation with a portion of a child's skull. It is difficult to state with any certainty that these two individuals were purposefully inhumed together as the burial, discovered in 1860 during railway construction, has little recorded information available. Harrison and Ó Floinn (2014) believe the child's remains could be intrusive and subsequently have not considered this a multiple burial. However, the remains of a child found with an adult male is a common occurrence in other study areas of this research and may actually be an example of this particular trend in Viking Age burial practice.

Interestingly, three of the four multiple burials are antecedent in nature (Table 18). At Church Bay [G1911] on Rathlin Island, a Viking Age male was inhumed in a flat grave cist that already contained a Bronze Age cremation urn, while at Croghan Erin [G1919] in Meath, a possible Viking Age inhumation was inserted into a pre-existing Bronze Age mound, which reportedly housed an individual sitting on a make-shift stone chair in the mound's lowest levels (this being the

original Bronze Age interment). The only evidence for the Viking Age interment is the presence of a spearhead (of possible Viking Age type) placed in the top of the mound above the seated individual. Although the presence of a seated Bronze Age inhumation is quite rare, these two burials loosely follow the format of antecedent burials identified in England and Scotland. However, the antecedent burial at Cloghermore [G1913] in Kerry is utterly unique in Viking Age mortuary records.

	Same Context	Different Contexts	Different Structures	Unknown
Contemporary				
Consecutive				
Antecedent	Cloghermore [cave/ec]	Church Bay [fg/cist+crem(U)]		
		Croghan Erin [mound/chair+?]		
Unknown	Islandbridge [fg/ec]			

Table 18. Irish MBs plotted by temporal sequence and spatial configuration showing structural composition.
See end of Appendix 3 for abbreviations.

Here, an adult male was inhumed in the floor of a cave accessed through a narrow shaft within a ninth to tenth century earthwork enclosure. Within his burial were the partial remains of an additional adult male of Viking Age date, deposited as discrete elements after dismemberment (the torso, arms, hands and feet). Additionally, five fragments of bone representing two subadults interred prior to that of the Viking Age male were also found within the fill of his grave.⁸ The additional bones may have been disturbed and accidentally mixed in with

⁸ The two subadults are presumably members of the pagan Irish population who used the cave as an ossuary from AD 635-815 (Connolly *et al.* 2005:40).

the soil covering the Viking Age male during his internment, but it is also possible that they were deliberately included as part of the burial ritual (Connolly et al. 2005: 60).

In other regions where monument re-use is quite popular such as England and Scotland, all of the burials are inserted specifically into mounds. However, the Irish antecedent graves make use of a diverse range of structures that have very little in common physically, giving the impression that they were made almost opportunistically. Of course, the lack of structural patterning does not mean that a shared rationale underpinning their construction did not exist. The dominance of the antecedent class of multiple burial in the (albeit limited) Irish corpus can be interpreted in a number of ways. It may be that the community burying these individuals desired to establish connections with earlier communities and create identities through burial that transcended time. These burials could also be interpreted using the lens of aggression that has been discussed in relation to the Manx burials, which favours an antagonistic assertion of land ownership and cultural superiority. It is also possible, and potentially more probable, that these three burials are a mix of more than one or even all these factors combined—the practicalities dictating burial location, the desire to express belonging and inheritance, but also the need to express cultural difference and socio-political legitimacy.

Iceland

Simple earth cut graves account for most single burials in Iceland, however they also show great diversity in the use of features within graves as well as a range of above-ground features, including stone settings and (perhaps most idiosyncratically) wooden post structures. One of the most interesting aspects of Icelandic burials, which are shared by both single burials and multiple burials,

is the frequent occurrence of associated horse burials (see Appendix 3 for further detail).

Although multiple burials are most frequently constructed as flat graves, mounds seem to be favoured in place of stone settings (the reverse of which is true for single burials), while a clear preference is evident for the use of a single context in their construction (Table 19). In fact, 13 of the 18 burials use the same context for all interments which constitutes over three quarters of the entire corpus. This is remarkable, considering that 11 of these burials are made using a single earth cut, presumably one of the hardest burial structures to reopen without disturbing the original interment. That is, of course, if these burials were consecutive. Perhaps this could be taken in evidence of a greater incidence of contemporaneous burials not visible to us because of the circumstances of their discovery? Another possibility is that spatial closeness was an imperative for Icelandic communities constructing multiple burials.

Unfortunately, much of the Icelandic corpus was discovered during the development of infrastructure in the mid twentieth century, meaning that for a large majority of burials the level of disturbance was too great to establish each burial's temporal sequence. Consequently, only three of the eighteen multiple burials could be classified, all of which were made over consecutive interments. Even so, the use of boats seems to play a large role in the nature of consecutive burials, a trait that is even more pronounced at Kaupang, discussed below.

	Same Context	Different Contexts	Different Structure	Unknown
Contemporary				
Consecutive	Surtssstaðir [fg/ec] Vatnsdalur [set/boat]		Litlu-Núpar [fg+SHG+DHG/boat] [fg/ec] [ps/ec]	
Antecedent	NA	NA	NA	NA
Unknown	Austarihóll [fg+DHG/ec] Aðalból [fg/ec with pl] Brandsstaðir [fg+SHG/ec] Brú [fg/ec] Grímsstaðir [fg+DHG/ec] Hafurbjarnarstaðir [fg/ec] Hrafnstaðir [fg/ec] Kaldárhöfði [mound/boat] Miklaholtshellir [fg/ec] Ytra-Garðshorn [set+DHG/ec] Ytri-Neslönd [fg/ec]	Ingiríðarstaðir 3 [wall/ec+bp with stpk] Kroppur [mound/ec+ec] Staðartunga [mound/?+?+?]		Ingiríðarstaðir 2 [fg+DHG/coff+?]

Table 19. Icelandic MBs plotted by temporal sequence and spatial configuration showing structural composition. See end of Appendix 3 for abbreviations.

The Vatnsdalur boat [G1884] saw seven individuals interred within the 6m long structure, starting with the single inhumation of a female and later providing the final burial place for a further six individuals, who may have been interred elsewhere and reinterred here at a later time. This was also probably the case for the Litlu-Núpar boat [G1795]. The first occupant was a man who had been temporarily interred in an earth cut surrounded (or possibly tented over) with a wooden post structure, who was later moved to the boat a few meters to its north, joined by an extension of the first wooden structure. The man was joined in the boat by a further male and female (perhaps at different times) at which time (or times) a single horse grave (SHG) each was placed at different locations just outside of the boat.

The only other consecutive burial is that of Surtstaðir [G1852], in which it appears a middle-aged male was interred in a flat grave earth cut, after which time a young adult woman was placed in the same cut, with her lower legs laid over the older male's.

Until such time that further multiple burials are uncovered using modern archaeological methods, there is little to be said regarding the temporality of the Icelandic corpus, a fact not true of the spatial dimension of these graves, which show a strong tendency for burial within a single context.

Kaupang

Unlike all of the study areas so far discussed in this chapter, flat grave earth cuts are in the minority for single burials at Kaupang. Instead, mounds prevail in single burial construction. Conversely, boats were used in the construction of over three quarters of all multiple burials and a clear preference is evident for the use of stone settings to mark them on the ground surface. Despite the

inclination to mark multiple burials above ground, mounds appear to have been infrequently used in their construction at Kaupang, a trend that is at complete odds with most of the study areas described thus far (i.e. England, Scotland and Mann) (see Appendix 3 for further detail).

Contemporaneity was not a decisive feature of Kaupang's multiple burials. Only one burial of all multiple burials found across its cemeteries was likely made in a single event (Table 20). It is also the simplest burial structurally, being formed of a single earth cut pit marked on the surface with a regular layer of stones. Within this burial were the remains of two unfurnished individuals placed in a haphazard, 'twisted' position. The first was a young adult of unknown sex, laying awkwardly on their back, while a second individual, of unknown age or sex, was laid in a twisted position on their side and facing towards the first. Both individuals most likely had had their hands and feet bound, and the first individual had been decapitated.

While decapitation and dismemberment are not uncommon in the Kaupang cemeteries, as we shall see in the 'Bodies' section of the next chapter (p.145), unfurnished earth cut graves are exceedingly rare. To many, this would seem like a classic 'deviant' burial, however the use of a regular stone layer above the grave integrates this burial with those found around it and more widely across the site. It also follows the form of the majority of multiple burials which contain individuals interred in the same context (albeit usually in a boat or other wooden structure). For all intents and purposes, it may have looked the same on the surface as all other burials in this area, suggesting that its occupants may have had more in common with their buried neighbours than is usually believed.

Unfortunately, the temporal dimensions of almost half of all Kaupang's multiple burials cannot be ascertained, however it is reasonable to infer that they drew significance from the extensive temporal depths achieved through successive consecutive interments. Boats played a major role in this by providing a burial structure— likely already embedded with an array of meanings for the communities living by the sea at Kaupang— with the capability of accommodating numerous individuals in a number of different configurations.

This is perhaps best observed in the three burials that were made across a number of different structures in the Bikjholberget cemetery. Each involved an initial grave which was later added to by further structures (boats and platforms) over the course of the next century. However, these initial graves only served as the locus of further elaboration and were not fully integrated with the inhumations that followed, despite there being an obvious spatial link with their graves.

While the material aspects of the graves differed, the later graves were utilising a prolonged concept of ritual time— perhaps this is similar to the antecedent burials found in England and Scotland, who may have had a desire to connect with the temporality of the prehistoric monuments and the ancient mound dwellers, but were keeping their distance materially? The opposite of this is demonstrated in Kaupang's burials that use different contexts within the same structures for consecutive interments. In the only three examples of this burial form, the context type for each interment matches the form of the original interment. Clearly, temporality was key at Kaupang, and the use of space and materials was crucial in articulating relations across various temporal scales.

	Same Context	Different Contexts	Different Structure	Unknown
Contemporary	Ka.275/276 [set/ec]			
Consecutive	Ka.265/266 [set/boat] Ka.284/285 [fg/boat] Ka.286/287 [set/boat] Ka.303/304 [set/boat] Ka.309 [set/boat] Ka.316/317 [set+SHG/chest]	Ka.150/151 [mound+cairn/crem(L)+crem(L)] Ka.203/204 [mound/boat+boat]	Ka.292/293 [fg/ec] [mound/boat with stpk] Ka.294-297 [fg/ec] [set/boat with stpk] Ka.298-300 [fg/boat] [wall/platform]	Ka.400/401 [mound/crem(L)+?]
Antecedent	NA	NA	NA	NA
Unknown	Ka.250 [fg/boat] Ka.253 [fg/boat] Ka.254/255 [set/boat] Ka.257-259 [set/boat] Ka.262 [set/boat] Ka.263/264 [set/boat] Ka.268 [set/boat] Ka.272 [set/boat] Ka.280/281 [set/chamber] Ka.301/302 [set/boat] Ka.310/311 [set/boat]	Ka.270/271 [set/chamber containing coff+?]		

Table 20. Kaupang's MBs plotted by temporal sequence and spatial configuration showing structural composition. See end of Appendix 3 for abbreviations.

Hedeby

The picture of single burial at Hedeby is best described as uniform. They are almost entirely (97%) constituted of flat earth cut graves and are usually formed either by plain earth cuts (n=693) or by cuts that contain internal features, of which the coffin is by far the most popular (n=580). Chambers and mounds do occur but are relatively rare in comparison. Mounds, however, play a proportionally larger role in the burial of multiple individuals than of singles, featuring in a quarter of the 20 multiple burials found at Hedeby (Table 21). Multiple burial mounds show a range of contextual combinations in which individuals were interred. Chambers, the most frequently used context, are often associated with additional earth cut graves that have been inserted elsewhere in the same mound, while mounds without chambers usually contain earth cut and coffined graves. The only mound that contained all individuals in a single context is the famous Boat Chamber Grave [G1052] in the western section of the southern grave field.

It is interesting to note that the only chamber burials containing (or being associated with) multiple individuals were made in mounds, while the chambers associated with single individuals are predominantly flat graves. One could argue that it takes less time and energy to insert an earth cut or coffin grave into an existing mound than opening a sealed chamber in a flat grave for the purposes of interring subsequent bodies. However, it cannot be ruled out that mounds were specifically chosen for multiple interments because of their potential ritual, social or political significance for the community. That said, there is very little that appears to physically distinguish multiple burials from single burials. It is true that above ground features, such as mounds and post markers, were used

in a greater proportion of multiples than singles (35% versus 2% respectively), but the majority are unmarked above ground.

The two contemporaneous burials made using a single context are exceptional to the usual trend of burial across Hedeby due to the manner in which the individuals are deposited and the burial structures used. The special nature of the boat chamber grave has already been mentioned, but the other burial, located in the harbour of Hedeby [G602], is also unique in that it contains the careful inhumations of two individuals on a bed of birchbark in intimate contact with each other. Nowhere else in Hedeby is this configuration observed, suggesting that they are of a significance somewhat removed from the rest of the Hedeby's multiple burial corpus. These other burials demonstrate a preference for consecutive interments, to some extent in the same context but predominantly utilising different contexts for each individual. Unlike the corpora from the Western Diaspora, which seems to intentionally use the same or slightly different grave forms for subsequent burials, those in the Hedeby corpus seem more incidental.

The use of various grave forms in these cases align with the greater proportional use of coffins, earth cuts and cremation deposits observed more widely across Hedeby. In general, the character of Hedeby's multiple burials suggest that they are motivated by different factors; some seem to intentionally reuse vertical space, in other cases it seems more inadvertent— although in these cases the original interments have not been discarded but have been purposefully kept in the same context as the later additions.

	Same Context	Different Contexts	Different Structure	Unknown
Contemporary	Sch.2/3 [fg/ec] Boat Chamber [mound+boat+THG/ chamber]	Gr.238/239 [fg/coff+coff]		
		Gr.166-168 [fg/coff+ec+ec] Gr.579/580 [pm/ec+ec] Gr.591/592 [ps/ec+ec] Gr.846A/B [fg/ec+crem(L)] Gr.742/742A [fg/ec+crem(U)] Gr.832 [fg/coff+crem(U)] Gr.905/905A [fg/coff+ec] Gr.1258/1259 [mound/coff+ec]		
Consecutive				
Antecedent	NA	NA	NA	NA
Unknown	Gr.2 [fg/bp]	Gr.971/976 [mound/coff with ps+coff]		
	Gr.6/7 [fg/coff]			
	Gr.83 [fg/coff]	Chamber 1 & 884		
	Gr.84 [fg/coff]	[mound/chamber+ec]		
	Gr.95 [fg/bp]	Chamber 2 & 982/983		
	Gr.124A/124B [fg/coff]	[mound/coff in chamber+ec+ec]		

Table 21. Hedeby's MBs plotted by temporal sequence and spatial configuration showing structural composition. See end of Appendix 3 for abbreviations.

While many of the multiple burials could be viewed as strategies of necessity (either due to lack of available space or accidental disturbance), the consecutive nature of the Hedeby corpus could also signal that this type of burial practice was carried out with an emphasis on intergenerational relationships but were executed with a looser conception of space than is evident in the minority of single context multiple burials.

Temporal Relations

As the multiple burials in this research are collected from a wide variety of sources, dating of the burials has only been achieved on a very general level, with resolution ranging from direct radiocarbon determinations to the very broad dates arising from antiquarian speculation and grave good analyses.

The dates of individual graves at Hedeby were not available at the time of this study, so the dates generally accepted to signal the beginning and end of burial activity in its cemeteries based upon artefact typologies have been used instead. The Kaupang graves have also been dated using typologies, summarised by Stylegar (2007), however in this case they have provided a good level of chronological resolution for each individual grave. Conversely, data for the Western Diaspora does not all originate from single cemetery sites, nor was it all excavated using standard archaeological methods, and so the reliability of the dates given in these cases is variable.

There are obvious problems inherent in using artefact typologies to date graves as a number of factors can obscure the date of the event; there are cases where individuals were buried with especially old items or heirlooms, while brooch and weaponry fashions varied chronologically and held different social connotations across the Viking World, and, in the case of multiple burial, the association of

artefacts with a particular individual among many may not be clear. However, the data must be accepted as it comes and what is presented here is only meant as an indication of the different timeframes over which these complex burials were constructed. With these limitations in mind, there are some basic trends that are observed from the chronological data at hand.

Burial Sequence

For over half of the multiple burials, it has been possible to establish the sequence of interment for some or all of the individuals they contain. These burials have been categorised into three sequence types: contemporary, consecutive and antecedent.⁹

	Absolute Freq.	Relative Freq. (%)
Contemporary	10	20.5
Consecutive	29	59.0
Antecedent	10	20.5

Table 22. Frequencies of burials classified on the basis of temporal sequence of inhumations. Temporal sequence unknown for n=42 burials (or 46% of data). Total percentages are relative proportion of 49 burials.

Of the 49 burials for which the temporal sequence is known, the most frequent form by far is the consecutive type, which is almost three times as common as the contemporary and antecedent types. As demonstrated in Table 22, there is an equal frequency of antecedent burials as there are contemporary burials, which further challenges the traditional assumption that multiple burials are made of either contemporaneous interments (i.e. masters and slaves, warrior brothers, mothers and children who died in childbirth etc.) or close consecutive interments of family relations (i.e. husbands and wives, parents and children etc.). If this was the case, a greater occurrence of contemporary multiple burials

⁹ See definitions in Appendix 1.

would be expected. Clearly, contemporaneity is not as decisive a factor as once assumed.

Table 23 shows that, while consecutive burial is the dominant form in both the Western Diaspora and Scandinavian samples, a much greater proportion of the Western Diaspora's corpus contains contemporary burials.

Western Diaspora	Contemporary	Consecutive
England	4	2
Mann	1	—
Scotland	1	4
Ireland	—	—
Iceland	—	3
Total	6	9
Rel. Freq. (%)	40	60

Scandinavian Sample	Contemporary	Consecutive
Kaupang	1	12
Hedeby	3	8
Total	4	20
Rel. Freq. (%)	17	83

Table 23. Frequencies of MB temporal sequences by study area.

In general, this is quite an interesting figure which could be explained by any number of factors. Contemporaneous burials may have some connection with areas of conflict, which could explain their prevalence in the colonial setting of the Western Diaspora. Stoodley (2002) has suggested that the Anglo-Saxon contemporaneous burials in England could be seen as a mechanism of crisis management, whereby humans have been sacrificed to affect some beneficial outcome for the community (i.e. health, prosperity and security). A number of the Viking Age contemporaneous burials show evidence of slaughter which may be related to such ritual practices. This may reflect the anxiety felt by new migrants living in an unfamiliar and, at times, hostile environment in which their fledgling settlements may have felt particularly vulnerable.

Contemporary Multiple Burials

This type of burial has sparked much interest over the years and has prompted rigorous debate over the causes of simultaneous death and collective burial, with interpretations concentrating on the themes of disease, warfare and human sacrifice. Some of these scenarios seem to be supported by the burial evidence in certain cases; not least the contemporaneous burial of two individuals at Ballateare [G2012] and Ka.275/276 [G2012]. In these cases, at least one of the two interred appears to have been intentionally killed. This is discussed in more detail in the 'Bodies' section below (p.143). On the other hand, the circumstances that led to other contemporaneous burials remains indistinct, like the co-cremation of a woman and an infant who were furnished with part of an intentionally broken sword and a cow skull at Heath Wood [G162].

Only ten of the multiple burial sample (approximately 20%) can be reasonably considered contemporaneous. A majority of these burials were found across the Western Diaspora, with the greatest number being found in England, although Scotland and Mann each also yield a burial to this group. The English examples range from the co-cremation of the female and infant at Heath Wood mentioned above, to the possible battle-related death of two men at Repton [G194] and Sonning [G206], and the possible ritual sacrifice of four older children buried together in a grave [G192] located on the edge of Repton's charnel mound. It has been suggested that they were killed as part of the ritual process of closing the charnel mound, which contained the remains of 264 men and women. In combination with the interpretation of the double male burials from Sonning and Repton— considered to be of warriors killed during their campaigns against the Saxons around the mid-870s— these burials certainly align with the themes of warfare and sacrifice that have dominated previous considerations of the multiple burial rite.

Just three contemporary burials occur in the Scandinavian sample and only one seems to have any connection with warriorhood. The men inhumed in the famous boat chamber grave [G1052] at Hedeby have been interpreted as a Danish king and his marshals, who either died alongside their chief in battle or were sacrificed to accompany him to the afterlife (Ellmers 1979; Wamers 1994). This interpretation has been thoroughly critiqued by Staecker (2005:7), who suggests that these individuals should be considered in line with the many other continental multiple burials found in recent years that contain family members, and less focus given to identifying individuals of different social status or historical importance.

This is likely the case for the only contemporary multiple burial recovered in Scotland at Westness, which contained a young adult woman who probably died during childbirth (or shortly after), based upon the recovery of the remains of a new-born infant with which she was inhumed [G2388]. The Heath Wood dual-cremation has also been considered as evidence of the relatively peaceful settlement of migrant Scandinavian families across the diaspora lands (Richards *et al.* 2004:105).

Plainly, these examples show that no single interpretation can be used to explain all instances of contemporaneous burial. Greater clarity may be achieved upon closer contextual analysis, but what is certain is that this type of multiple burial was used relatively infrequently during the Viking Age and is not wholly representative of multiple burial customs.

Consecutive Multiple Burials

The database contains 29 multiple burials which are thought to have been made over a number of consecutive interments during the course of the Viking Age. It is no surprise, considering the dominance of the double burial in general, that most consecutive burials contain just two individuals (n=20). However, consecutive burial seems to involve the most diversity in regard to composition, as the type is also represented by three triple burials, two quadruple and quintuple burials each, and the large boat burial containing seven individuals at Vatnsdalur in Iceland [G1884].

The consecutive multiple burial is also the most diverse in its use of various burial structures and contexts, with burials being made in horizontal, vertical and mixed spatial configurations, mostly within the same structure but also across different connected structures. Subsequently, it is very difficult to form a coherent picture of this practice in the face of such diversity. Looking at their temporal sequence may shed more light on the significance of the consecutive burial in relation to its contemporary and antecedent counterparts.

Obviously, the function of time in these burials is paramount. Regrettably, very few of the interments within these graves have been dated meaning that it is only possible to explore the temporal dimensions of a handful of consecutive burials, all of which originate from Kaupang. And too, this is not surprising given that the greatest total number of consecutive burials found in any one study area belong to Kaupang (12 of 29 burials or 41%). The datable graves are shown in Figure 11.

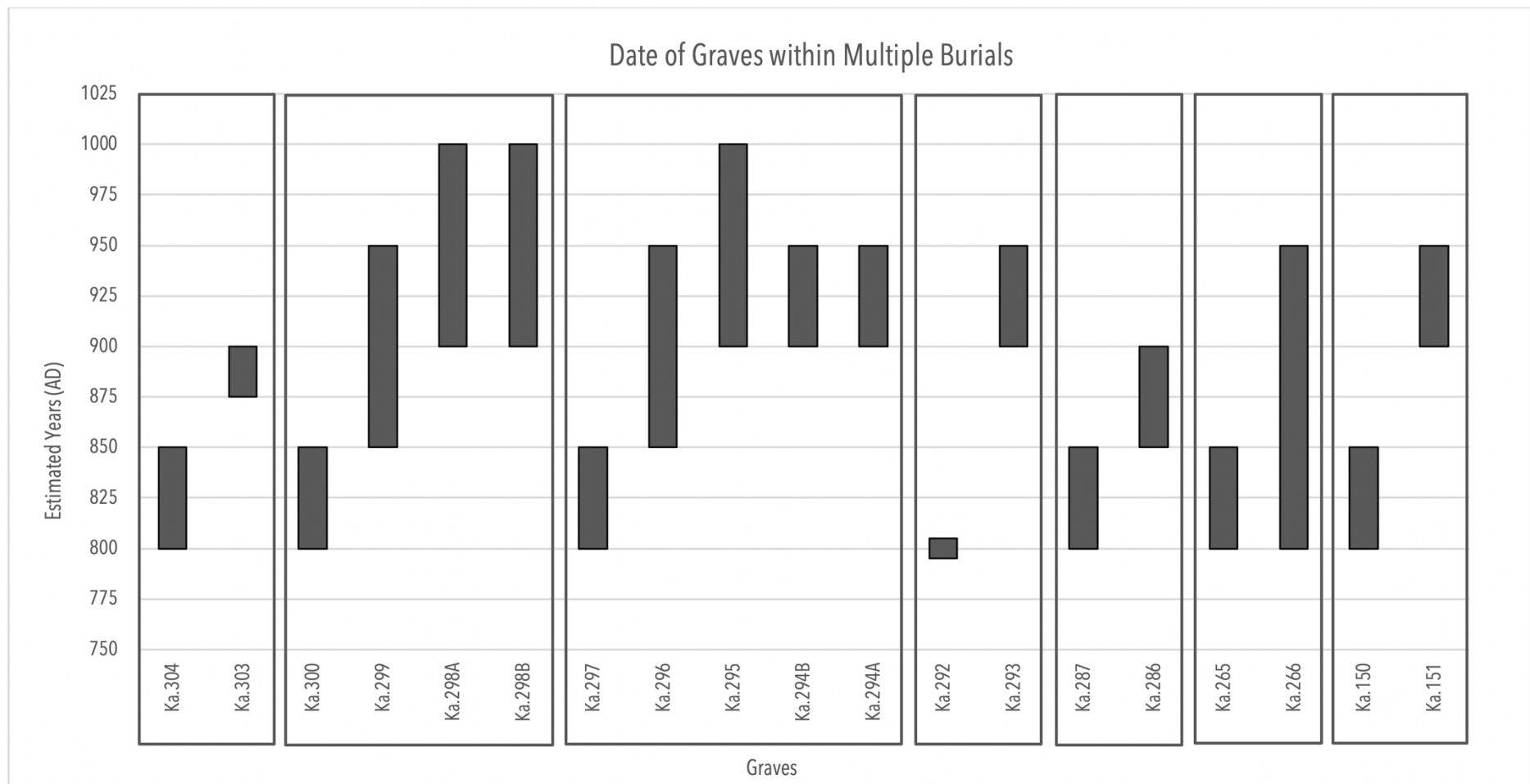


Figure 11. Dates of individual graves based upon artefact typologies as given by Stylegar (2007:103–128).

As mentioned above, there are problems inherent in using artefact typologies as a method of dating events, however they may be able to give us a rough guide as to the relationships negotiated in these contexts. In the two larger burials Ka.294-297 [G2073] and Ka.298-300 [G2074], the temporal sequence is very similar demonstrating a greater degree of overlap than is evident in the smaller burials. In three of the five double burials, a substantial passage of time occurs between the initial and subsequent burials.

How do these continuities and discontinuities translate into the lived experience of the individuals interred, and how did it inform their own sense of personhood when considering their place in the world in relation to those that went before? One approach may be to map the dates of these graves against the potential number of generations alive at the time, to see whether those initially interred were possibly known to the prospective individuals with whom they were to be buried at a subsequent time (Table 24).

A generation can be defined as the average time between a mother's first child and her daughter's first child (Sayer 2010:65). Sayer has estimated possible generational coexistence from Anglo-Saxon cemeteries which provides a fruitful approach to the potential relations between individuals interred in multiple burials. It is possible to subdivide internal chronologies by the potential for two people to have coexisted: "If just two generations co-existed at any one time then the people from the first generation of a settlement probably never interacted with the third, and the third will only know of the first through their interactions with the second" (Sayer 2010:66). On this basis, two generations would be alive (or within living memory of each other) at any given time.

Relation	Abs. Freq. (n=27)	Rel. Freq. (%)
Living Memory 1 (same) to 2 generations	4	15
Beyond Living Memory 3 or more generations	23	85

Table 24. Frequencies of consecutive burials whose date range indicates the interment of individuals over generations. Generation was calculated by dividing the total number of years represented in the date range by a generational average of 30 years (Stoodley 1999:119; Sayer 2010:69).

Using this framework, it appears that just 15% of consecutive burials contained individuals who may have known each other in life. This challenges the traditional view that people interred in multiple burials commonly knew each other and calls in to question the relevance of assumptions that the graves contained the burial of husbands and wives, masters and slaves, and parents with children.

It is important to make clear that this method of calculating generational interaction cannot be considered to be at all precise. Sayer has highlighted the problems inherent in calculating generational interaction based on estimated date ranges. It is relatively rare for graves to be dated absolutely with such precision to allow for an accurate estimation of the interlude between interments, and this is certainly the case for the data discussed here. It is salient to note that all of the chronological data presented in Table 24 is based upon broad date ranges that have been estimated from grave good typologies. While these burials are considered consecutive based on the stratigraphical or relative evidence, interments could have taken place at any time within this period. Accordingly, a great deal of caution must be used when considering the data. Nevertheless, this method can serve as a starting point for the discussion of potential interaction between individuals within multiple burials, until such time as these burials are dated more accurately.

Speaking in broad terms, the clear majority of burials consisting of individuals who lived 'beyond memory' of each other may underline the importance of temporal depths in articulating personhood through multiple burial. This may also suggest that strategies of burial 're-use' in consecutive and antecedent burials have more in common with each other than previously acknowledged. The discourse centring on monument reuse has developed in isolation from multiple burial theory, but this research suggests that they should be considered together.

Antecedent

There are ten multiple burials classed as antecedent based on their subsequent use of pre-existing burial structures. Classification of a burial as antecedent can be somewhat subjective, resting upon evidence which supports the intentional use of pre-existing burial structures. This was found to be the case for four burials in Scotland, three in England and three in Ireland. The only area which did not yield an antecedent burial was the Isle of Man, and while one Manx burial could possibly fit the criteria, it was discounted.¹⁰ Notably, all but two of the antecedent burials made use of existing mounds ranging in date from the Bronze Age to the centuries just prior to the Scandinavian diaspora. The two other structures were a Bronze Age cist at Church Bay [G1911] and a cave at Cloghermore [G1913], both in Ireland.

¹⁰ The Balladoole burial purposefully made use of an existing prehistoric enclosure but its construction did not make specific use of any one burial (or group of burials) located within. The burial contained the remains of two individuals, but the temporal sequence of the second Viking Age interment could not be established so it was not assigned a classification.

Furthermore, all the antecedent burials use different contexts to inter the dead except in one case; the Cloghermore cave burial [G1913]. No aspect of the Cloghermore burial resembles any other Viking Age burial in the Western Diaspora. Hence, its use of the same context for a Viking Age male with the antecedent remains of two earlier Irish juveniles, and the dismembered remains of a further Viking Age male, are not so surprising. Clearly, the Cloghermore burial does not sit well amongst the other antecedent burials in which a degree of spatial distance is maintained in relation to the original occupant. This spatial distance manifests itself most commonly in the use of vertical space; in five burials, Viking Age interments have differentiated themselves from the original interments by being placed above them. Only at Stenness [G2350] does the Viking Age interment use horizontal space as well as vertical in articulating its relation with the original mound dweller.

Collectively, these burials contain the remains of 23 individuals— including the Bronze Age and Iron Age antecedents with which the Viking Age individuals were buried. Of this number, just eight have been sexed or gendered. In all cases, these individuals are males except for one possible female represented at Aspatia [G102] in England, who also happened to be interred with a Viking Age male in the only example of a triple burial of antecedent type. There was not enough age data available for any of the 23 interred to establish any trends in relation to age.

It seems fair to state that while females may have been included in antecedent burials, it appears that this specific practice was one reserved for men. Unfortunately, the dates of the prehistoric burials were not able to be established, which would add an interesting dimension to this discussion, but it can be said with certainty that the antecedent burials made use of monuments

with considerably little temporal depth (Late Iron Age burials) and those of substantially older origin (Early Iron Age back through to the Bronze Age). This may indicate that the length of time between interments was not of major importance, but more simply that they were from 'before'.

As we saw in the 'Spatial Relations' section of this chapter (pp.95–115), the material structures used to articulate relations between antecedents and their successors or 'inheritors' varied by region, with some opting to observe a degree of similarity in the manner in which the Viking Age interments were made, while others articulated a different material identity through differential use of burial contexts.

The Intersection of Spatiality and Temporality

It is clear that multiple burials use different configurations of time and space to articulate specific relational identities in death. There is a temptation to assume that the closer the proximity of bodies within the multiple burial structure, the closer the relationship between the individuals. It is hard to argue from a modern western perspective that this was not the case at least some of the time. For example, the case of the two closely laid adults on a bed of brushwood in Hedeby Sch.2/3 [G602] presents an image of intimacy which is hard to look beyond. At the same time, one could also argue that the shorter the period of time between interments, the greater the chance that the co-buried had some form of knowledge of each other's existence, but this is not necessarily indicative of the closeness of their relationship, if any relationship existed.

Table 25 shows the relationship between spatial placement and the temporal dimensions of each burial type. Where it has been possible to establish both variables, it appears that horizontal spatial relations are slightly more common

than the vertical (46% versus 40.5% respectively). Horizontal placement is used significantly in the specific context of contemporary burial, showing little reliance on other spatial dimensions. Alternately, a considerable number of multiple burials use vertical positioning to articulate relationships between the deceased, playing a much more pronounced role in the consecutive and antecedent burial types. This means that, where a burial exhibited a temporal depth, it often used vertical space to articulate this.

	Horizontal (n=17)		Vertical (n=15)		Both (n=5)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Contemporary	5	29	1	7	1	20
Consecutive	10	59	9	60	3	60
Antecedent	2	12	5	33	1	20
Total	46%		40.5%		13.5%	

Table 25. Frequencies of relational placement of graves within MBs for each temporal sequence type (where known). Total percentages are relative proportion of 37 burials.

In all cases, the vertical relational placement of a Viking Age grave within an antecedent mound occurred above the initial grave without causing disturbance in the process. Thäte's (2007) analysis of the practice, as it occurs in Scandinavia, resulted in a similar trend which she explains may be connected to social status. She argues that the placement of graves within the central and top portions of prehistoric mounds is indicative of the respect held for the mounds' original occupants while simultaneously symbolising their own superiority (Thäte 2007:241). Respect for the original occupant was no doubt a core concept in the antecedent burial practice, and probably formed the basis upon which these monuments were selected for reuse in the first place. However, I am less convinced that a vertical spatial hierarchy is necessarily indicative of a status hierarchy. If respect, by which I mean 'citation', was a core feature of this practice, then surely there is less chance of disturbing extant graves using a process of slow and steady excavation from the mound's surface downwards

(dependant on the size of the mound, of course). It may have been imperative that the original mound dweller remained in place for the significance of the so desired spatial, temporal and identity connection to be affected.

	Horizontal	Vertical	Both
Same Context	22	5	2
Different Context	10	12	4
Different Structures	1	–	3
Total	34	17	9

Table 26. *The relationship between context–use and spatial placement.*

The much less frequent occurrence of the concurrent use of both horizontal and vertical space in all multiple burials appears irregular and may reflect responses to localised conditions. Table 26 shows the relationship between context use and spatial placement. Here, the horizontal use of space emerges as the dominant strategy when plotted in this manner, but really only in connection with burials containing all individuals within the same context. It plays a lesser role in burials using different contexts and it is more often used in conjunction with vertical space in multiple-structure burials. Vertical space is used in more different-context burials, affirming the connection between vertical space and temporality. The use of different contexts is significantly linked with the consecutive and antecedent burials, as plotted below in Table 27.

	Same Context (n=22)		Different Context (n=22)		Different Structure (n=4)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Contemporary	7	32	3	13.5	–	–
Consecutive	14	63.5	10	45.5	4	100
Antecedent	1	4.5	9	41	–	–
Total	46%		46%		8%	

Table 27. *Frequencies of context use within MBs for each temporal sequence type (where known). Total percentages are relative proportion of 48 burials.*

The diverse use of spatial and temporal dimensions in these burials challenges the characterisation of the multiple burial rite as one governed by contemporaneous, horizontal placement of individuals within a single context. It is clear that a broader concept of burial space is being used to articulate relationships between individuals in these burials than has been traditionally recognised.

Table 28 shows the use of contexts specific to each study area of this research. The figures demonstrate that context use was fairly evenly split between those using the same context and different contexts in all areas except for Iceland and Kaupang.

	Same Context	Rel. Freq. %	Different Context	Rel. Freq. %	Different Structures	Rel. Freq. %
England	6	50	6	50	–	–
Mann	1	50	1	50	–	–
Scotland	5	56	4	44	–	–
Ireland	2	50	2	50	–	–
Iceland	13	76	3	18	1	6
Kaupang	18	75	3	12.5	3	12.5
Hedeby	9	45	11	55	–	–
Total	54	61	30	34	4	5

Table 28. Relative frequencies of context use in relation to study area. Context could not be established in three burials.

These two regions show a significant tendency towards same context use and are also the only study areas which yield burials built over multiple structures. Three burials at Kaupang (Ka.292/293 [G2072], Ka.294–297 [G2073] and Ka.298–300 [G2074]) were made using different structures across horizontal and vertical space, and all can be found located next to each other in a line within the central section of the Bikjholberget cemetery. In each of these burials, the original interment was made in isolation sometime in the early ninth century. In Ka.292/293 [G2072] and Ka.294–297 [G2073], two males were interred each in their own simple earth cut graves aligned N-S circa AD 800. Later (possibly up

to 100 years in the case of Ka.292/293) in the late ninth century, the two male graves were each covered by a separate boat— oriented in the same direction as their earth cut graves— which would later receive further inhumations over the next century. The multi-structure burial in the case of burial G2074 is slightly different. Here, a woman was interred by herself in a boat also during the early ninth century. After some time, perhaps 50 years, she was dug out of the boat in a disarticulated state and placed in a pile on a rock shelf immediately adjacent to the boat. This probably happened when the next phase of inhumations was taking place, which saw a further three individuals interred over the next century.

The burial G1795 at Litlu-Núpar in Iceland differs slightly again, in that the initial male burial is moved from its original burial (IV) into the boat burial (III), at which time a horse is slaughtered and placed to the boat's north (V). The male is later joined in the boat by a further two individuals, each also accompanied by single horse graves (VI and VII). Each of these burials start with an initial grave and then see further inhumations that occur at a considerable spatio-temporal distance. The fact that the initial graves at Kaupang are never fully integrated with the rest of the burial assemblage (not seen at Litlu-Núpar) is curious and seems quite contrary to the study area's clear preference for use of the same context in multiple burials. One might think that this bias would negate the maintenance of different structures used to inter the dead. Perhaps the time span between interments was considered too long (and therefore inappropriate) for integration, which may reflect the spatial and temporal distance we observe in antecedent burials across the Western Diaspora.

The Nature of Multiple Burial

Multiple burials are rich with relational possibilities. They bring together bodies, objects, materials and practices, in entangled assemblages that are produced in reference to what came before and what may be in the future—palimpsests that are in a constant state of becoming. The quality of relations articulated through multiple burials are multi-dimensional; burials were configured using various scales of time and space, and various material strategies.

In classifying these burials using an inclusive approach, I have incorporated many more multiple burials into the corpus than traditional views usually allow. I have specifically broadened the criteria used to classify them in terms of their temporal and spatial scales— beyond the usual focus on contemporaneity and single context use— to allow an investigation based solely on the purposeful burial of more than one individual in relation to another, however that should manifest itself. When viewing these results, particularly the dominance of the consecutive form, it may appear that the numbers reflect my methodology more than the actual archaeological evidence. However, all of these graves demonstrate a clear and intentional relational strategy (i.e. the matching alignment of graves vertically, or the spatial connection between interments bridged by superstructures). In this manner, I believe the methodology allows us to see the immense diversity of multiple burial forms as they exist, without preconceptions which artificially narrow our field of view.

Regarding the nature of the multiple burial rite, the discussion above has established that it was a common element of the suite of burial practices performed across the Western Viking World, and one that was well integrated with the mortuary landscapes in which they occurred. Individuals of all kinds

were afforded multiple burials, showing that it was not any socio-biological aspect of their identity which brought about their inclusion in this form of burial. However, the differential frequency of various sex and age groups in relation to the number of individuals interred together does suggest that these factors did hold some influence.

Furthermore, various material strategies were used to articulate the relationships between these individuals, with monumentality underpinning multiple burials in Britain while the burials of Iceland and the Scandinavian sample appear to favour less prominent but similarly robust structural relations. Nevertheless, these material qualities served to articulate an under acknowledged facet of this rite, which has proven to be of fundamental importance to the practice of multiple burial; the concept of temporal continuity.

Upon classification of the temporal sequences that constructed each burial, it was found that contemporaneity was of far less importance to the multiple burial rite than the demonstration of considerable temporal depth. The combination of consecutive burials with those of the antecedent kind constitutes 80% of the entire corpus. Multiple burials are concerned with the articulation of 'association' between those interred, and in most cases, this is not achieved through the use of shared space but rather through the use of shared time— temporal continuity.

If this is so, then previous consideration of multiple burials has greatly underestimated the significance of time in the constitution of an individuals' personhood in the Viking Age. Rather than any physical characteristic which marked people as appropriate candidates for multiple burial— such as health, ability, ethnicity, sex or age—it may be that these individuals were conceptualised as temporally distinct, possessing a quality or personhood which

necessitated articulation through the use of a temporal dimension. The question of Viking Age personhood is taken up in the next chapter, which explores how bodies were used to configure relationships within the multiple burial rite.

Producing Persons in Multiple Burial

Following Fowler's watershed publication, *The Archaeology of Personhood* (2004), a developing corpus of research has begun to explore just what it is to be a person in the societies of the past. At the core of this work is the acknowledgement that the category of 'person' is culturally specific and takes shape through the relations that form between a person and their world. On this basis, personhood is a thoroughly relational concept and one that holds immense potential for the study of Viking Age persons as it is articulated through complex relations between bodies and things in the multiple burial rite.

This chapter begins with a review of the concept of personhood and its integration into archaeological discourse from its sociological and anthropological origins, as well as a brief consideration of how personhood engages with concepts of embodiment. From this vantage point, the chapter will then outline the results of the data analysis focused on the many ways human bodies were treated and deposited in Viking Age burials. The chapter will conclude with a discussion on how the research expands upon the conceptual categories of 'being' currently debated in Late Iron Age contexts and show how a relational approach focused on personhood can expand our understanding of this unique practice and its role in constituting 'persons' of all forms.

Personhood and Embodiment

Personhood is the condition, or state, of being a person as it is understood in any specific context (Fowler 2004:7). Personhood, as a concept, is not universal

but rather continuously negotiated in specific times and places and in reaction to varying situations and social relationships. Persons are constituted, maintained and transformed through social practices, their experiences of the phenomena of their world, and the relationships that spring forth from these interactions. Persons are processual and relational (Fowler 2016:398). As such, multiple burials provide an unparalleled context in which to explore the constitution of personhood through their articulation of a range of social relationships that materialise across different temporal and spatial scales. The concept of personhood which underpins the analysis undertaken in this research follows a course set out by Fowler in 2004 and again in 2016. As such, a brief overview is given of the development of personhood theory over the last 15 years.

Fowler's (2004) influential study of personhood emphasised that different social processes and phenomena have the ability to generate various modes of personhood. His survey of personhood across European prehistory highlighted some recurrent features which directly challenge contemporary western constructions of an indivisible, bounded and totalised *Individual* (Fowler 2004:7). Borrowing from anthropological research that explored alternate constructions of personhood, most notably the work of Strathern (1988), Marriott (1976) and Busby (1997), Fowler suggested that persons could also be *Dividual*, being made up of many different tangible and intangible parts that originate both within and outside of themselves (2004:7). This type of person is said to have relational personhood. Dividual persons are composites of substances, ideas, and relationships that are ever changing and are configured in contextually specific ways (Fowler 2004:7). This concept opens up the possibility of personhood being partible and permeable, where one's personhood could be reconfigured through the extraction of a particular element to be given to someone else

(*partibility* as suggested by Strathern 1988), or through the movement of substances and energies between persons (*permeability* as suggested by Marriott 1976) (see Fowler 2004:15,19). In both modes, personhood is structurally reconfigured through relations with other humans and worldly phenomena. Further, Dividual personhood can also be fractal, thereby operating at varying scales so that persons can “dispose of parts, or act as a part” of a smaller or larger collective; an object, a family or a society (Strathern 1988:324–325 as quoted in Fowler 2004:28).

Of specific relevance to the following discussion of personhood— as it was negotiated through manipulations of the body in the Viking Age— is Fowler’s adoption of the distributed and circulated personhood observed by Strathern (1988) in Melanesia. In this context, Strathern argued that persons were “constructed as the plural and composite site of the relationships that produced them”, being *multiply authored* by numerous inherited and developing relations (1988:13, 159). This quality sees persons as partible entities, who can dispose of parts of their person through mediated exchange (Strathern 1988:324):

“First, as in ceremonial exchange transactions, things are conceptualized as parts of persons. Persons or things may be transferred as 'standing for' (in our terms) parts of persons. This construction thus produces objects (the person as a 'part' of a person— him or herself or another) which can circulate between persons and mediate their relationship. As parts, then, these objects create mediated relations. They are not, of course, apprehended as standing for persons: that is our construction. They are apprehended as extracted from one and absorbed by another.”

(Strathern 1988:178)

In essence, persons are able to detach part of themselves, which becomes embodied or objectified in the substances they exchange with others (Strathern 1988:192). This being the case, Fowler (2004:21-22) has advocated that the

most fruitful avenue in interpreting past modes of personhood for archaeologists may be to focus on strategies of transaction, exchange media, transformations, and social technologies.

Over the last decade or so, a number of critiques have questioned the singular spectrum that Fowler's original theory of relational personhood envisioned, in which Individuality and Dividuality were placed at opposing extremes (Brittain and Harris 2010; Sahlins 2011; Marshall 2013; Wilkinson 2013). Particularly, the spectrum appeared to advocate a 'one or the other' understanding of Melanesian personhood, which was not supported by the ethnographic observations of other scholars (notably LiPuma 1998). Rather, persons in that context were found to be multi-dimensional, a state in which Dividuality and individuality operated in tension. Later archaeological and anthropological studies also demonstrated that the material signatures of embodied persons can be far more diverse and changeable than Fowler's first iteration of personhood allowed (Harris et al. 2012; Borić et al. 2013; Wilkinson 2013; Duncan and Schwarz 2014; Wengrow and Graeber 2015).

Another key criticism levelled at Fowler's use of Strathern's observations is the supposition that the Melanesian construction of 'person' can be simply transposed onto other cultural contexts (see Brittain and Harris 2010; Marshall 2013). Although I do not think, from my own reading of Fowler's argument, that he advocates such a straightforward adoption of Melanesian personhood concepts as suggested by others— in fact, I think he clearly stresses the spatio-temporal situatedness of these ethnographic examples in the opening chapters of his thesis— I wholly agree with their assertion that cultural specificity is of the utmost importance when considering notions of personhood in the past. Accordingly, it is not my aim hereafter to impose the Melanesian construct of

person onto the Scandinavian Late Iron Age, or suggest that we envision Melanesian-like persons crowding the markets of Viking Age Hedeby. Rather, and in the absence of an extant population with whom we can consult, I suggest we may use the examples provided by Fowler, Strathern and others as a starting point from which we can probe the possibility that Viking Age concepts of personhood were not always indivisibly bound by the body.

In response to the critiques mentioned above, Fowler revisited his thesis in a recent article (2016) assessing the continued relevance of relational personhood and Dividuality. He argues that the two modes of personhood he once advocated are still relevant but only as they operate within multi-dimensional axes that recognise other foundational aspects of personhood— such as singularity and plurality, inalienability and alienability, the distinctive and the typical— accompanied by a consideration of how they emerge in different scenarios. Fowler reasserts that any form of relational personhood must be assessed in connection with the categories of identity of which archaeologists have long explored; sex, age, kinship and ontology (2016:408). Fowler makes clear:

“The point is not simply to say whether personhood is divisible or indivisible, but the extent to which each can be identified, through what media, in what contexts and assemblages, and so on. Appreciating the ways that personhood is distributed in time and space with respect to bodies, objects and materials is the goal, tracing: the modes of action that individualize, or make permeable or essentialize; the domains of activity in which different dimensions of personhood are brought to the fore; the events in which a person is made more or less indivisible, for instance.”

(Fowler 2016:403)

While it is important to recognise potential dimensional diversity within an exploration of relational personhood, it also must be understood that, within any given cultural context, many varied modes of personhood may be in

operation simultaneously within a single society, and persons can move between these ways of being in relation to specific circumstances (Fowler 2016:405).

The defining feature of the multiple burial rite is its comprisal of two or more people who, in burial contexts, are placed in physical relation to one another. Multiple burials begin with that intentional physical relationship, but they certainly do not end there. Till now, studies have hinted at the complexity of the relations that are articulated through multiple burial by conceptualising these physical relationships as manifestations of various social relations; for instance, the inverse placement of a slave body sacrificed to accompany their master is a physical assertion of 'other' status (e.g. Taylor 2005; Reynolds 2009). However, while they go some way to explore the relations between people, they are primarily concerned with the identity of the deceased; master, slave, wife, outcast. But, while we recognise today that no person is reducible to their gender, age, religion, ethnicity or social status, we have continued to project reductionist categories on to people in the past, and the study of multiple burials has been no exception. Moreover, much of this interpretation has been based upon a series of assumptions grounded in Western post-Enlightenment thought; the boundedness of individuals to the human body and the secondary ontological status of non-human beings are just two examples.

Of relevance here is the concept of embodiment, which attempts to apprehend personhood as it is experienced within and through the body. A framework grounded in embodiment theory redresses some of the asymmetries inherent in archaeological thought by bringing to the fore the diverse practices and social relations through which bodies, and persons, are brought into being (Crossland 2010).

Embodiment really begins with Mauss' *Techniques of the Body* (1973 [1935]), in which he states: 'man's first and most natural technical object, and at the same time technical means, is his body' (Mauss 1973:75). Rephrased, the body is simultaneously the *object* of technique, a technical *means*, and the *subjective origin* of technique (Csordas 1990:11). Hence, it is from the body that our social world is constituted. The body plays an essential and reflexive role in the production and maintenance of the social relations through which personhood emerges. It is onto the body that an individual's way of being— their *socially informed body*— is inscribed, and it is through this body that *habitus* is experienced, reproduced and transformed (Bourdieu 1977:79,124).

Taking the body as the 'existential ground of culture and self' (Csordas 1994:6), the Viking Age body is a useful starting point from which to examine the constitution of personhood in this period, and how personhood emerged from the relations of bodies and things in multiple burials.

Bodily Experiences

The previous chapter focused on the nature of the multiple burial rite and drew out some key observations regarding the use of temporal sequences to establish temporal continuities and juxtapositions between individuals in these contexts. But spatiality also had a key role to play within this schema, making material the relations that were articulated through time. This chapter explores the role of bodies specifically as a core component of the conceptualisation of personhood. Focusing on the bodily experience, treatment and deposition of individuals within these contexts may yield insights into the manner in which multiple burials transformed Viking Age persons through reconfiguration of the body.

The Lived Body

Despite the Viking Age being typified by violence in the popular imagination, there seems little evidence of it in the sample analysed in this research. There are 2197 individuals represented collectively across all single and multiple burials, but only 35 show any evidence of trauma. Two of these individuals also bore evidence of having pathological conditions while a further 12 people had skeletal pathologies not associated with any type of trauma. Therefore, a total of 47 people probably suffered physically at some point in their life, if not their death, but only so far as we can see this in their bones.¹¹ These individuals account for just 2% of the combined population at Kaupang, Hedeby and across the Western Diaspora. It must be stressed that this figure is most likely *not* fairly representative of the lived experience of bodies during this period; the antiquarian nature of many of the records prevents an in-depth analysis of pathology and trauma, as much of the skeletal material was not examined or retained for posterity.¹² Accordingly, the available osteological sample is very small so the following discussion should be taken only as a first indication of what was probably a far more common occurrence.

Pathology

There seems to be no difference in the frequency of pathology observed between males and females, however the sample is dominated by middle to older adults, with just two subadults (an adolescent suffering from tuberculosis and scoliosis, and an older juvenile discussed further below) figuring in these records.

¹¹ Of course, soft-tissue wounds would not be evident on the skeleton so the data presented here is almost certainly greatly under-representative. See also footnote 12.

¹² Of the 350 sites from which this corpus of burials was produced, approximately 244 sites (or 70%) were investigated before 1955 when osteological assessment of skeletal remains from archaeological contexts was far more limited than in more recent years. See Appendix 4 for further information on data quality.

One of the most recurrent diseases evident in the sample is osteoarthritis, observed in five adults, while other degenerative diseases and deforming conditions of the spine— such as scoliosis and spondylosis deformans— were identified in a further five individuals. It remains unknown whether these conditions manifested in a manner physically visible to the community, such as a hunch back or having trouble in performing tasks, however these ailments surely would have had an impact on their daily lived experiences.

For the most part, the physical differences these pathologies wrought may have only been slight, such as the single case of spina bifida occulta detected at Machrins [G2314] which may not have been as prominent or debilitating as other forms of spina bifida. However, this was probably not the case for the teenage boy at Balnakeil in Scotland [G2246] who suffered from an enlarged right clavicle, humerus and ulna, and asymmetrical development of his skull; his presence in a small community would have been physically distinctive and perhaps altered how he was perceived by others. What is interesting about all these individuals is that not a single person exhibiting any type of pathology was found in a multiple burial— all 13 people were given a single burial. The individuals interred in multiple burials, while seemingly healthier on a general level, may testify to a different kind of life.

Injuries

We will come to discuss trauma more fully in the following section, however 23% the trauma cases collected in this research show that the trauma occurred in life. The skeletal remains of these individuals showed injuries that had healed before their death, including broken wrists, tooth loss and fractures from falls and accidents. Seven of the eight people showing life-incurred trauma were male

and aged overwhelmingly in the middle to older adult range. The sole female at Cnip [G2268] in Scotland was also a middle adult and she appears to have injured her left shoulder and hand in an accident. Most of these cases come from the cemetery at Cnip in Scotland which, rather than indicating people had harder lives in Scotland, simply confirms that further osteoarchaeological investigation of Viking Age skeletal remains needs to be undertaken across the region. Two individuals who had incurred trauma in life were buried in multiple burials. The skeleton of a 60-year-old man at Westness [G2360] in Scotland showed a deformed left clavicle due to a traumatic injury which has been considered as evidence of torture. The osteologist believes that he had had his arms tied behind his back at the wrists and was then hung from the wrist ties. The trauma healed during life but left him with severe arthritis as a result. This man was interred with a young adult male and several parts of his body were missing. The other individual showing trauma was the male at Cloghermore cave [G1913] who had once broken his wrist. Comparing this to the treatment of the male with whom he was interred— a man who had been dismembered and was missing much of his body— shows that individuals in multiple burials often had very different bodily experiences.

The Body at Death

There is a clear preference for the multiple burial of individuals that have suffered trauma. Collectively, 35 individuals show evidence of trauma that either occurred over the course of their lives or was the cause of their death. Just 21 of these people were interred in single burials, compared to 14 that were given multiple burial. In relative terms, people showing trauma make up 1% of all single burials, which is considerably less than the 15% of multiple burials that do. While this may simply reflect that a greater number of individuals within multiple burials are afforded detailed osteological examination (more frequently

than individuals in single burials), it is possible that this figure is also reflective of the context within which multiple burials are constructed.

The Nature of the Trauma

A greater number of individuals from this sample had experienced trauma as a cause of their death. A total of 11 individuals exhibited injuries from which they did not survive. In eight cases, these injuries were caused by sharp-force trauma. Six individuals had incised wounds from blades at Ballateare [G2012], Repton [G196], Pierowall [G2327], Torksey [G221] and York [G242] and most of these were inflicted to the skull. The remaining two individuals showed evidence of penetrative wounds; the broken tips of four arrowheads were found lodged in the back, arm, stomach and thighbone of a male interred in a boat burial at Westness [G2383] while a single knife was found beneath (possibly lodged in) the back of an adolescent at St Mary's Bishophill Junior [G208]. Three of the juveniles at Repton [G192] exhibited trauma as cause of death but the nature of this is unknown.

Where sex/gender is known, all these burials contain males except one. The only female recovered amongst this group of burials is the woman at Ballateare [G2012], discussed in Chapter Three (see Appendix 5 also). She was killed by a slashing blow to the upper-back quarter of her head. The portion of her skull's parietal bone was cleaved off by a sharp and heavy instrument and was not recovered at the time of excavation. She was placed on her back, in a north-south position, with her arms raised at a right angle to her body, indicating that rigor mortis had set in before she was buried. The bodily treatment this woman received is unique amongst the corpus and will be returned to in the section on body arrangement below (p.157).

Regarding the wider identification of trauma, it may be significant that all these cases occur in the Western Diaspora; three were interred in multiple burials and, as is the case of the two burials at Repton, trauma was observed in more than one of the occupants of these burials. For example, the two men inhumed in grave 295/511 [G196] at Repton met particularly violent ends. The older male had suffered numerous injuries in his final moments, exhibiting several cuts to the arm and jaw, while his lower vertebrae also showed slashes that could only have been inflicted from within the stomach cavity itself, suggesting he was disembowelled. Additionally, each of his toes and both of his heels had also been split lengthways with a sharp implement. There is some conjecture as to how the man died; some now believe he had been killed by the thrust of a sharp implement (probably a sword point) into his eye, which pierced the orbital socket and penetrated into the brain (Hadley 2008:274; Richards 2003:388), while originally it was reported his death was caused by receiving a massive cut to the top of his left femur, simultaneously severing his femoral artery and removing his genitals in a single blow (Biddle & Kjølbye-Biddle 1992:40). His burial companion also showed signs of sharp-force trauma, exhibiting a substantial slash to the right side of his skull caused by a blade.

All of the blade injuries recorded in this research occurred in England and Scotland, which could reflect the colonial context in which they were incurred, but may conversely signify that a greater proportion of the skeletal remains from the Western Diaspora have been the subject of osteological analysis due to the prevalence of inhumation in this region.

Dismemberment and Decapitation

The skeletal remains of a small number of individuals— just seven— demonstrate that they were decapitated or dismembered. Where sex/gender and

age are known, all the individuals are adult males. These cases also appear far more commonly in multiple burial than in single. From the evidence available, it is impossible to ascertain whether this occurred as the cause of death or as part of post-mortem manipulations (perhaps of a ritual nature). Four individuals were deposited in parts; the companion of the male at Cloghermore cave [G1913] has already been mentioned, but another possible Irish example comes from South Great George's Street [G2000], where a young adult male was found to be missing part of his arm. While the excavator suggested the arm may have been severed prior to burial, the disturbance observed throughout the rest of the burial indicates it is more likely the result of taphonomic processes.

More robust examples come from Kaupang, where two different burials (Ka.298-300 [G2074] and Ka.316/317 [G2087]) contained children who had been joined in the grave by dismembered men. In Ka.298-300, the temporal sequence is uncertain, and it is not known whether the child or the dismembered man were the first to be interred of the pair (if they were not buried at the same time). The sequence is a little clearer in Ka.316/317, as Blindheim and Heyerdahl-Larsen (1995) believe the small domestic chest used for the interment of both bodies indicates that the child was the initial interment, thereby also explaining why the dismembered man was missing his legs and feet (to fit in to the chest). However, the fact that we see the same combination of burial partners and treatment in both these examples (as well as the inclusion of young children in the Cloghermore deposit [G1913]) leads me to believe that the differential relations between each individuals' bodily integrity, age and positioning, is intentional. If the severed arm at South Great George's Street burial [G2000] is discounted as disturbance, the dismemberment recorded in this study occurs *only* in multiple burials.

A rather different bodily treatment is decapitation. Three instances have been documented in this research; an individual at Knoxpark [G1990] in Ireland and at Hafurbjarnarstaðir [G1704] in Iceland appear to have been decapitated, while one of the individuals in the unfurnished multiple burial Ka.275/276 [G2059] at Kaupang suffered the same fate. The Knoxpark case is not certain as the adult man's head was missing but the Hafurbjarnarstaðir burial is more probable. Here, an adult male had been decapitated and his head had been placed between his thighs. The head of the individual in the Kaupang grave was also missing, but the fact that the individual's feet were bound supports an interpretation of decapitation, leading Blindheim and Heyerdahl-Larsen (1995:130) to infer the individual was a slave, while Stylegar prefers an explanation of judicial execution (2007:90).

The contexts within which dismemberment is observed seem of a different nature than those of decapitation. Dismemberment is strongly connected with the burial of children in multiple burials (although it has not been established that the children were also dismembered along with the adult males accompanying them), while the instances of decapitation are observed only in burials containing adults along with the other markers of a judicial nature. Thus, the two practices might not be considered as two different articulations of a single rationale. It is hard to say, on the absence of two of the three heads that were decapitated, whether decapitation served any purpose other than as a method of execution. The two missing heads may have been retained for purposes we cannot identify. Hence, it may be superficial to suggest a purely judicial function for the practice on the basis of its use in the medieval period, particularly when decapitation was not used as a means of slaughtering horses in Icelandic burials, but was rather an element of 'ritual theatrics' carried out

after the horse was already deceased (Leifsson 2018:130, see also Lucas & McGovern 2007).

Further study of this practice must be undertaken to establish the possible ritual purposes of the practice. In the meantime, it seems safe to infer, from the manner in which the dismembered remains were deposited with the children, that dismembered human bodies took on a clear ritual function, perhaps acting as a (re)generative material for the children with whom they were buried. Some authors have already suggested a similar purpose for the use of human remains in a number of other practices, such as Fahlander's (2016) reading of post-burial interaction with antecedent remains as a material resource charged with vibrant powers, and Gansum's (2004) suggestion that the use of cremated human (and animal) bone in the forging of iron weaponry was to imbue the items with specific animated properties (see also Back Danielsson 2007 for a further excellent example).

Material Relations

From the potentialities of bodies to act as vibrant materials, let us now move on to consider the relations articulated between bodies and other objects in burials.

Mechanisms of Restraint

A further seven burials— four single burials and three multiples— show evidence of purposeful restraint. This type of practice has been widely interpreted as a means of preventing the deceased from rising from the grave (Gräslund 1980; Gardela 2013a; Giles 2015). In two cases at Kaupang (Ka.275/276 [G2059] and Ka.274 [G3000]), the feet of the individuals were bound (Figure 18). One was a single burial and the other was the grave companion of the decapitated individual in the multiple burial mentioned above.

These three individuals were interred in two neighbouring graves that mirrored each other and suggest that they were made in quite specific circumstances. Whether their graves were judicial or sacrificial is unknown, however it suggests that either binding as a method of restraint was not commonly used in burials, or that restraints were not left in place once the person in question was deceased.

Other burials exhibit other modes of restraint; in five burials, the deceased had a boulder or stones placed directly on top of their bodies, as if the stones were intended to weigh down those interred (Figure 12). The case in Ka.262 [G2050] at Kaupang may not be intentional as the stone was relatively small and could simply have been dislodged from the stone setting layer that covered the boat burial. It is also possible that the stone found with the individual in Ka.297 [G2073] was not placed on the body, but just placed next to it.

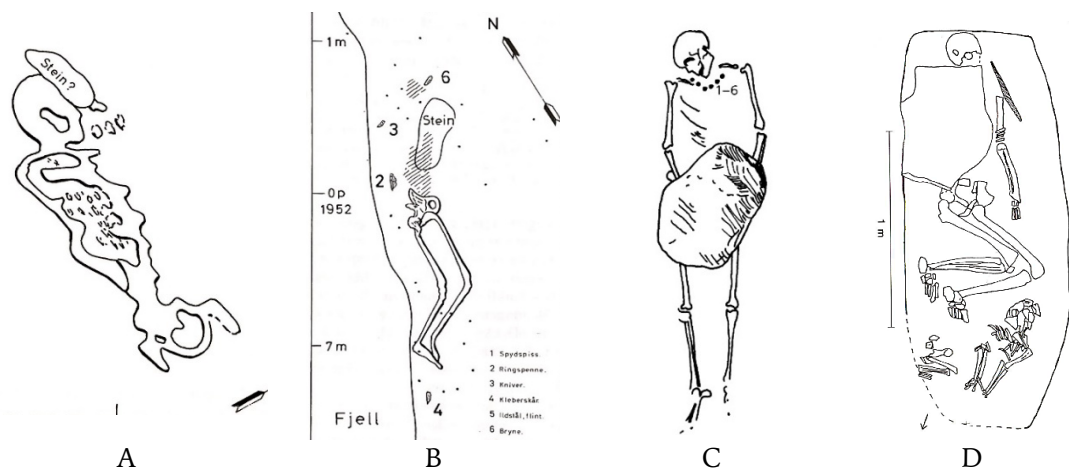


Figure 12. Burials exhibiting use of boulders to restrain deceased. A) Ka.262 [G2050]. After Blindheim et al. (1995:122, fig.13). B) Ka.297 [G2073]. After Blindheim et al. (1995:121, fig.11). C) Hedeby 86 [G347]. After Arents & Eisenschmidt (2010:309, tab.11). D) Burial from Vað [G1882] in Iceland. After Kristinsdóttir (1988:93).

Only three examples are more probable; Gr.86 [G347] at Hedeby, and a burial each from Traðarholt [G1874] and Vað [G1882] in Iceland. All these graves are single burials. This type of treatment is often cited in examples of multiple burials in the Scandinavian literature, for example at Gerdrup on Zealand, and

Fröjel on Gotland (Christensen 1981; Carlsson 1999; Gardela 2009, 2011b). However, from the data presented here, it does not appear to relate to multiple burial in any significant way, being represented by two tenuous examples.

The evidence of this practice is ambiguous and difficult to interpret. As mentioned, these burials are often interpreted to contain revenants or the 'dangerous dead' who were thought to rise from the dead and act maliciously against the living community. This might be so, as there is ample evidence that Viking Age communities continued interaction with their deceased community members after their death. However, it may also have been used as a masking practice, as suggested by Back–Danielsson (2007) for other similar practices. Back–Danielsson argues that masking is a process whereby one transforms their appearance by a range of techniques (classically conceived, but not restricted to, facial coverings) including the creation of effigies, the use of clothing, costumes or tattoos, and even the manipulation of features on objects and buildings. These techniques utilise concepts of ambiguity, paradox and representation to create diverse meanings (Back Danielsson 2007:101). In this manner, it may be appropriate to read the stone coverings as a means of enacting a transformation of the personhood of the individual, rather than a method of preventing reanimation.

Furnishing of Grave Goods

Grave goods are not found in every Viking Age grave in this dataset. Only 939 of the total 2197 graves have been documented as having at least one object found in association with the burial context. This amounts to just 43% of all burials being furnished, which is probably not an accurate figure given the varying preservation rates for inorganic and organic materials, as well as the circumstances surrounding each burials' discovery, excavation and

documentation. In fact, the figure is probably overinflated as studies have shown that only people from particular social groups, probably just a fraction of the population, were given a furnished burial (Dommasnes 1982; Harrison and Ó Floinn 2014). However, with these caveats in mind, some trends in the data presented here can be considered.

Of particular interest is the frequency of the deposition of grave goods in multiple burials as compared with single burials. Approximately 870 single burials were recorded as having been associated with grave goods, while this is true for only 69 multiple burials. However, in relative terms, grave goods are almost twice as common amongst multiple burials than they are singles (Table 29).

	Graves with associated goods (Freq.)	Proportion for grave type (%)
Single Burial	870	41
Multiple Burial	69	77
Total	939	43

Table 29. Rate of deposition of grave goods in both burial types.

This might not be surprising given that previous interpretations of multiple burials have hinged upon the human sacrifice of some individuals as a mark of the others' economic and social capital (see Chapter Two). Thus, multiple burials have been implicitly understood as high status graves. But is this assumption justified? It may be beneficial to look at the deposition of grave goods in connection with particular occupants within a multiple burial to assess whether this 'wealth' is shared by all or was used to differentiate between the deceased.

There are many issues with assuming social status and identity based upon the items with which people were buried (cf. Andersson 2005; Artelius 2005;

Williams 2006), but studies like those of Dommasnes (1982) and Solberg (1985), who have investigated grave good assemblages in connection with social status in the Late Iron Age burials of western Norway, have demonstrated that there is value in this approach. As this thesis is concerned with the ontological structures upon which personhood was constituted (and the role of multiple burial in negotiating this), the following assessment of grave good deposition should be considered in this light. What is of interest is not simply the quantity or quality of objects deposited with individuals, but what they may signal about the personhood of those interred, particularly in relation to one another.

In many cases, it is difficult to tell whether all individuals interred in multiple burials were furnished with objects, particularly for those that use a single context for all of the deceased. This is true for 14 multiple burials in which objects were found but could not be attributed to any particular individual. Conversely, it is much easier to assess assemblages associated with specific individuals if they have been kept somewhat separate within the wider burial structure. The grave good evidence from a total of 34 multiple burials indicate that every occupant was specifically associated with grave goods. This was harder to establish for a further 11 burials whose grave good assemblages suggest that all individuals probably were furnished but could not be stated with certainty relating to the juveniles with whom they were buried. Just ten burials appear to contain individuals for whom only one person was associated with grave goods, however this figure is questionable as it may be that goods associated with other individuals were either not identified or recovered, were not preserved, or (as is increasingly being documented across the Viking Age mortuary landscape) were intentionally revisited, removed or dispersed in the years following the last interment (Brookes 2010; van Haperen 2013, 2015; Klevnäs 2007, 2011, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016; Lund 2013, 2017; Lund and Arwill-Nordbladh 2016).

A considerable number of multiple burials (n=22) do not contain any grave goods but, again, there is a good chance that this is due to the factors mentioned above. This is almost certainly true for the majority of unfurnished burials which originate in Hedeby (n=12) and Iceland (n=5).

Hedeby's multiple burial corpus is characterised by a large number of consecutive burials that (either purposefully or accidentally) invasively disturbed the original graves, while the practice of grave re-opening (including the removal of skeletal remains and grave goods) appears to be particularly prevalent in the Icelandic context. Thus, it is difficult to examine patterns of grave good deposition in these two corpora. However, there are a number of burials in other study areas for which it appears that traditional grave goods were purposefully withheld from the occupants.

The only English burial without traditional grave goods is that of the quadruple burial of subadults at Repton [G192] which contained individuals exhibiting violent trauma. The only non-human element in the burial was the jaw of a sheep which had been placed at their feet. It is important to note that this may have been considered a grave good by those carrying out the burial. Similarly, the only multiple burial at Kaupang (Ka.275/276 [G2059]) that appears truly unfurnished is that of the two individuals who were seemingly 'thrown down' in a twisted position into a pit; one had been decapitated but both had had their feet bound. Interestingly, they were buried adjacent to a single burial containing a woman exhibiting the same characteristics of twisting and binding, but who also had had a horse's jaw placed next to her head (Ka.274 [G3000]).

The careful placement of animal bone, possibly in lieu of any traditional grave goods, is echoed in one of the unfurnished Icelandic burials. Grave 3 at Ingiríðarstaðir [G1737] stands out from the rest of its unfurnished corpus; a simple earth cut grave containing a neonate was found positioned partly under and beside a turf wall. No objects were associated with its grave but approximately a meter or so away (and also covered by the turf wall) was a pit of unusual content. It contained a large number of animal bones along with two fragments of a human cranium. The skull showed evidence of blunt force trauma, which was almost certainly the cause of the individual's death (Leifsson 2018:192). Even more distinctive was the articulated skeleton of a cat which had been placed near the skull fragments. The whole assemblage had then been closed over with a pile of stones (Leifsson 2018:192).

The two unfurnished burials found in Scotland, Finstown [G2278] and Stenness [G2350], are problematic and have been included in this study as only possible examples of Viking Age interments. Both sites exhibited the subsequent insertion of a steatite cremation urn into cists located within extant mounds originally created for earlier prehistoric cremations. While it is possible that the steatite urned cremations were an intentional attempt by Viking Age communities to echo the character of the earlier unfurnished cremations, it is also possible that the lack of associated grave goods signifies that these subsequent interments were not actually of Viking Age date at all—rephrased, they may *look* like pre-Viking Age cremations because they *are* pre-Viking Age cremations. Without further detail, however, it is impossible to tell.

There are a further three Scottish burials that also seem not to have been furnished. Like the previous two examples, the circumstances of the Westness [G2360] unfurnished multiple burial is curious as it contained two adult males

who had been buried in a vertical stack over consecutive events. Outside of Hedeby, it is rare for interments to be made vertically in flat earth cut graves, especially in Scotland where most multiple burials are made in mounds and cists. The two men were lying one above the other; not much can be said of the lower burial but the upper burial was conspicuously incomplete— all of his vertebrae and almost all bones from his hands and feet were missing, while the other parts of his remains were severely post-mortally damaged. Moreover, his upper body was deformed during his life from what appears to have been torture induced trauma (see Appendix 5) (Sellevold 1999:27). That many of the unfurnished burials also bear evidence of trauma or distinctive treatment of bodies in death, particularly in relation to isolated deposits of animal bone, suggests that these burials are a unique class of multiple burial which does not align well with the trends exhibited in the rest of the corpus. These themes will be taken up in the succeeding chapters.

Modes of Burial

The results of the human data presented thus far speak to a range of bodily experiences resulting from a diversity of lives lived. It is clear that the Viking Age body was exposed to incredible violence at times, while other practices like dismemberment and the imposition of restraints may indicate that bodies were also ritualised. This section addresses how bodies, of whatever experience, were configured with other bodies in burial, in order to help contextualise the types of bodily experiences we observe and the relationships that are articulated through relational configuration.

Cremation versus Inhumation

Of the 91 multiple burials considered here, 87% are comprised of individuals who have all been buried using the same rite, either inhumation or cremation,

while just 8% contained individuals who were treated differently from each other. Table 30 below shows that inhumation is the dominant rite used for all individuals interred in multiple burials,¹³ although burials containing a combination of inhumation and cremation still occur, if infrequently. It is interesting to note that the five burials which combine Viking Age inhumations with Viking Age cremations all originate from the Hedeby and Kaupang cemeteries, while the only burials from the Western Diaspora that exhibit both rites are antecedent in nature. Only two burials of this type occur (Claughton Hall [G134] England and Church Bay [G1911] Ireland) and in both instances a Viking Age inhumation had been placed with an earlier prehistoric cremation. If we trust the Viking Age dates given for the few cremations recovered in Scotland, it would appear that cremation-only multiple burials are twice as likely to contain at least one individual interred prior to the Viking Age.

Only two multiple burials contain individuals that were all cremated and buried within the Viking Age; Mound 50 at Heath Wood [G162] in England and Ka.150/151 [G2219]. The Kaupang burial may not be considered a purely Viking Age multiple burial, as the time lapse between the initial and subsequent interment was considerable—possibly exceeding 100 years).¹⁴ If the community viewed the first interment as antecedent in nature, then this increases the uniqueness of the Heath Wood burial, for it is certainly a contemporaneous Viking Age double-cremation and the only one of its kind.

¹³ This is also true for the single burials in this sample, of which 83.2% (n=1753) are inhumations, just 8.2% (n=173) are cremations and 8.6% (n=181) are unknown.

¹⁴ The first burial was made in the early ninth century and the second has been dated to the early tenth century.

Rite Combination	Viking Age	Antecedent	Total
All Inhumations	71	2	73
All Cremations	2	4	6
Inhumation and Cremation	5	2	7
Unknown	3	2	5
Total	81	10	91

Table 30. Use of inhumation or cremation rites in MBs by temporal type.

The cremation rite is restricted to double burials, being found in no other multiple burial types. Antecedent individuals, very often interred using cremation, are rarely incorporated into multiple burials containing more than two people, demonstrating how strongly rite type is associated with the temporal dimension of multiple burials.

Handling the Body

Bodily Arrangement

Obviously, bodies must be configured within the structural constraints of each multiple burial, however even within these limits, there is great diversity observed in the positioning of human bodies across the corpus. While the arrangement of the bodies within a majority of multiple burials remain unconfirmed, a total of 28 burials had descriptions and plans that provided enough detail from which the body positioning of those interred could be ascertained. The greatest number of these, fifteen in total, are boat burials that originate mostly from Kaupang but also from Kaldárhöfði [G1746] and Hafurbjarnarstaðir [G1702] in Iceland, and Càrn a' Bharraich [G2260] and Scar [G2342] in Scotland (Figure 14). Additionally, the configuration of individuals within a total of seven flat burials and one mound burial were also able to be plotted (Figure 15 and Figure 16).

Looking at the boat burials first, there seems little that unites the configurations of bodies they contain (Figure 14). Very generally, there seems to be a preference for orienting all those interred in the same direction (i.e. all heads pointing to the same end of the boat), however this can only be confidently observed in just seven burials. In a further three burials, individuals have been placed in mirror image of each other, where their feet meet in the middle of the boat. In fact, this concept can be observed twice in Ka.294-297 [G2074], where the central male has his feet pointing towards the female in the northern end, while his head is met by the head of another female in the southern end of the boat (Figure 13.b). It is also clear that the line of the keel seems to structure the placement of most of the bodies within the burials. The adherence to the keel line is observed even in the two most 'crowded' boat burials, Ka.257-259 [G2059] and Ka.294-297, in which three adults are placed length ways from bow to stern (Figure 13.a).

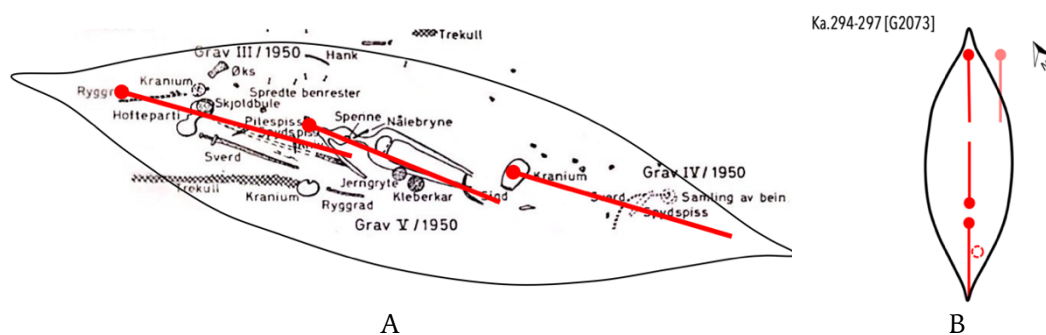


Figure 13. Arrangement of bodies along the keel line. A) Ka.257-259 at Kaupang. After Blindheim et al. (1995:56 fig.1). B) Ka.294-297 [G2073].

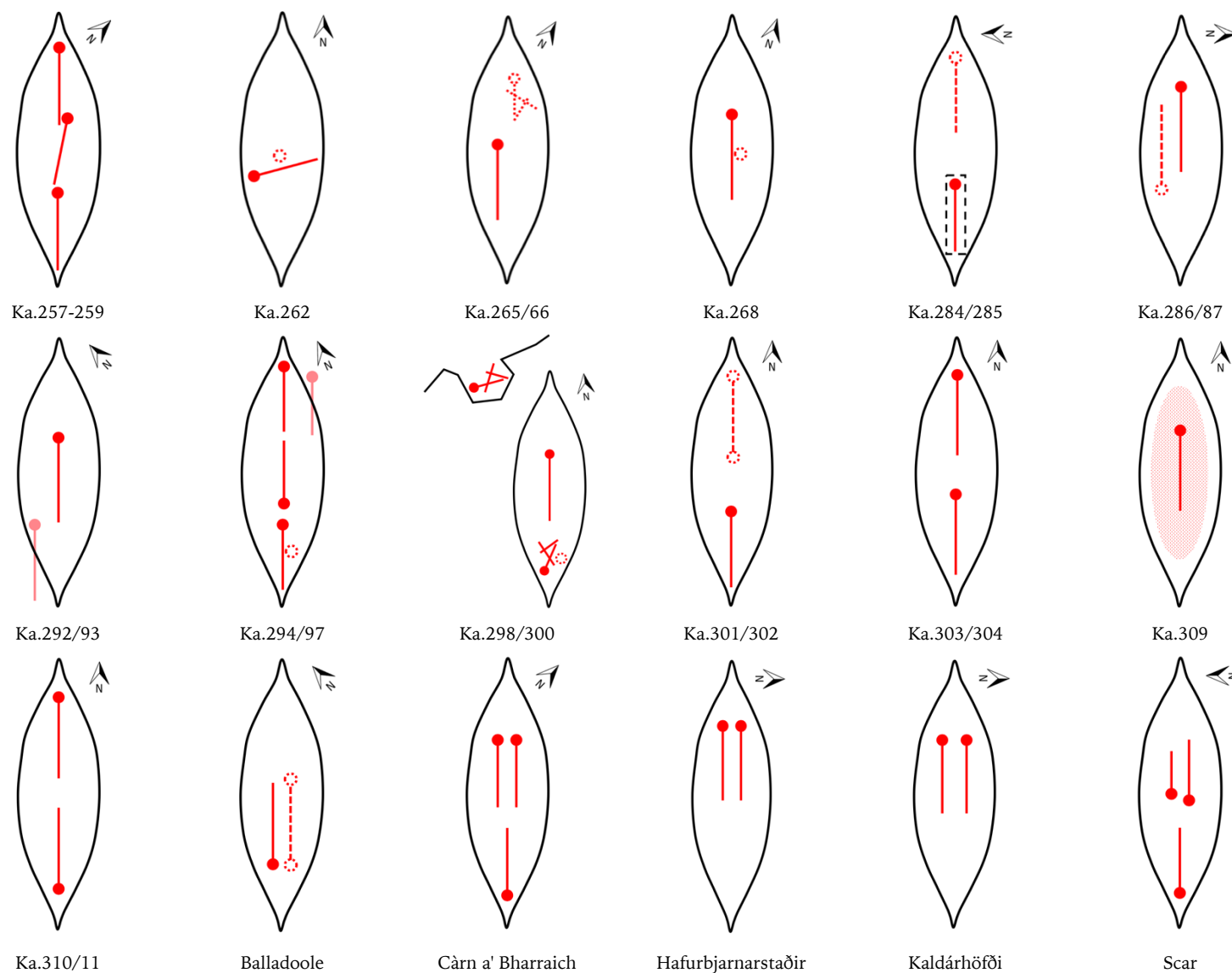


Figure 14. Arrangement of bodies in boat burials. Solid red lines denote confirmed positioning, broken red lines show possible positioning. Circles at each end of a body indicate that head position could not be ascertained. Solid and broken black lines denote confirmed and possible burial structures, respectively.

This could suggest that the concept that guided the placement of interments was an embodied knowledge and/or experience of the movement of boats, particularly in that all of the bodies are placed in relation to the bow and stern ends. To support this, it seems that rarely were the deceased placed in an orientation that crosscut the line of the keel, as observed in Ka.262 [G2050]. Here, the individual's body was placed perpendicularly to the keel line, with their head resting along the western (port) side of the boat and their feet towards the eastern (starboard) side. The individual, an adult male, was interred with a child of whom only a few remains survived (only being identified upon osteological analysis) so it is unknown whether the child was also placed across the boat in line with the male. While this is the only burial in which this positioning is likely to have occurred, it is possible that the practice occurs more frequently elsewhere in the Western Viking World.

Other than the keel, we might expect to see a particular component of the boat serve as a standard focal point around which bodies were arranged— such as the mast, or a single end of the boat— however this does not seem to be the case. In some instances, one end of the boat was preferred and housed all of the deceased, while in other burials, individuals were placed at either end of the boat. In a few cases, the deceased had been placed in all three sections of the boat (i.e. bow, amidships, stern), but it seems much more common to concentrate the deceased in one half of the boat. Thus, it seems that symmetry was not of major concern in the construction of these burials.

Turning now to the mound and flat burials, eight of these yielded enough detail from which the arrangement of all individuals could be established. All of those interred in the flat burials, either sharing the same context or using different contexts, have been positioned using the same orientation (i.e. Figure 17 and

Figure 18). This is not the case for the only mound burial in which the arrangement of both individuals is known; the female interred at the top of the Ballateare mound [G2012] was placed perpendicularly to the male in the coffin at the centre of the mound below her body (Figure 15). This certainly seems unusual for a contemporary multiple burial; the individuals in most contemporaneous burials are placed in somewhat harmonious relation to each other. Conversely, mounds almost always show angular arrangements of burials due to their size and the fact that they are made consecutively over many (sometimes thousands of) years. Being the only case at hand, the sample size is far too small to make any certain statements about the concepts which may be underlying this arrangement, but other aspects of this burial (including probable human ritual killing) mark it as unique. Perhaps the juxtaposition of both bodies— created through vertical 'distancing' and an impression of dissonance articulated through differential bodily orientation— should be viewed in a similar light.

In general, the flat burials present a picture of orientational harmony, despite being constituted of a number of consecutive multiple burials. However, the burial from Sedgeford [G204] also gives a sense of disjuncture. The burial is of consecutive type and contains an adult female resting her head on the croup of a horse. At a later time, a child was placed to her left, disturbing the front half of the horse when it was set down.

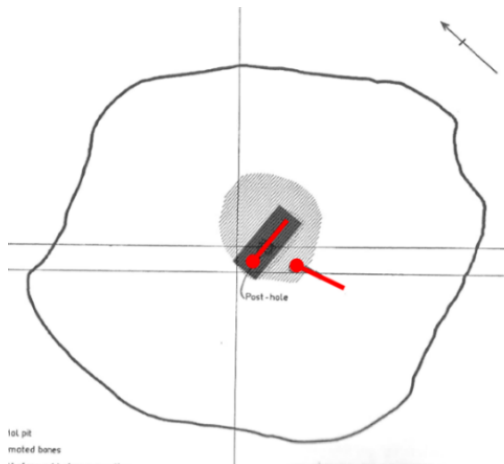


Figure 15. Arrangement of bodies at Ballateare [G2012]. Amended after Bersu & Wilson (1966:44).

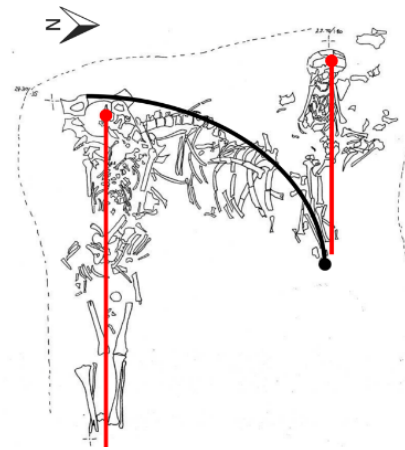


Figure 16. Arrangement of bodies at Sedgford [G204]. Amended after Cross (2011:203).

The child was placed at some distance from the woman. This is unusual as most children in multiple burials, as is discussed in greater detail below, are deposited in close physical contact with those with whom they are interred. However, in this instance, the child's grave is not made in line with the female's body but rather is placed further to the west (Figure 16). When horizontal spacing is used in same context grave cuts, most individuals are placed so their torsos and/or feet align. It seems as though the child was intentionally placed slightly diagonally from the female's position. The reasons for this could be manifold, and perhaps even taphonomical, but it creates a sense of incoherence, even though they are oriented in the same direction.

Bodily Contact

Just 19 burials contain individuals who appear to be in direct physical contact, although only eight of these are confirmed— the majority (n=11) are inferred based on circumstantial evidence, such as the placement of single bones or grave goods. The confirmed burials are shown in Table 31 and those for which contact is possible or inferred are shown in Table 32 below.

G_UID	Burial Name	Evidence	People	Temporal
G1852	Surtstaðir	Female laid upon male's legs	FM	Consecutive
G2047	Kaupang 257–259	Female laid upon male's legs	FM	?
G2059	Kaupang 275 /276	Two people holding hands	UM	Contemporary
G2081	Kaupang 309	Cremation over male inhumation	UM	Consecutive
G162	Heath Wood Mound 50	Comingled cremation	FC	Contemporary
G386	Hedeby 124A /B	Extra cranium found on male's pelvis	UMF	?
G192	Repton 360-363	Four children laid upon each other	CCCC	Contemporary
G602	Hedeby Sch.2/3	Female laid upon male's arm	FM	Contemporary

Table 31. MBs containing individuals in confirmed physical contact. F = female; M = male; C = child; U = unknown.

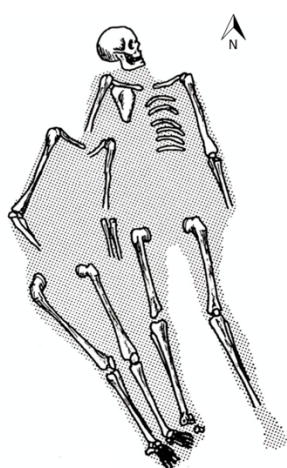
G_UID	Burial Name	Evidence	People	Temporal
G2388	Westness 1A	Female– child comingled inhumation	FC	Contemporary
G2010	Balladoole	Male and female comingled inhumation	FM	?
G2050	Kaupang 262	Male–child comingled inhumation	MC	?
G2054	Kaupang 268	Female–child comingled inhumation	FC	?
G2073	Kaupang 294–297	Female–child comingled inhumation	FC	Consecutive
G2074	Kaupang 298–300	Male–child comingled inhumation	MC	Consecutive
G2360	Westness 2A/B	Male stacked upon another male	MM	Consecutive
G1913	Cloghermore	Four individuals in same earth cut	MMCC	Antecedent
G2087	Kaupang 316 /317	Both in same coffin	MC	Consecutive
G344	Hedeby 83	Both in same coffin	AC	?
G345	Hedeby 84	Four individuals in same coffin	AAAU	?

Table 32. MBs containing individuals in possible physical contact. F = female; M = male; C = child; A = adult; U = unknown.

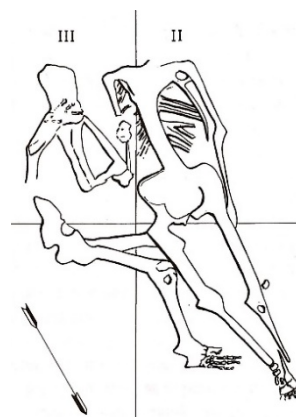
From these figures, it appears that the engagement of bodies occurs in only a fifth of multiple burials, despite the fact that most individuals interred in these burials are placed in the same context. However, if we consider only multiple burials that use the same context for some or all of the interred (n=56), the total number of burials in which physical contact occurs constitutes just 34%.

It appears that bodily contact was only thought appropriate for one third of all co-buried individuals. This figure may have been higher in reality, but we will likely never know for lack of skeletal preservation. Taking these figures at face value, bodily contact does not seem to have been central to the spatial rationale underlying the placement of bodies in multiple burials. In six burials, the contact

occurs between adult males and females; generally, the female bodies are arranged in relation to the male rather than vice versa. In each case, the female has either been placed on the arm or legs of the male sometime after his interment, the level of contact is not particularly comprehensive, being described in most cases as slight bodily overlap, as demonstrated below (Figure 17 and Figure 18).



*Figure 17.
Female laying on the right arm
of male in Hedeby Sch.2/3
[G602]. After Arents and
Eisenschmidt (2010:342
taf.44)*



*Figure 18.
Sk.3 turned towards Sk.2,
appearing to grasp their arm in
Ka.274/275 [G2059]. After
Blindheim et al. (1995:130
fig.7).*

However, the nature of the contact in all but a few cases does not seem based upon lack of available burial space. There is no intercutting of graves evident, nor are other burials situated in the immediate surrounds for which communities may have been forced to bury their dead a little closer than they usually would have liked.

This becomes even more pronounced when we observe the deposition of children. Most bodies buried in physical contact involve children. Contact has been inferred for most children as their fragmented and fragile remains are usually not recognised amongst the remains of the adults with whom they were buried; it is usually only during osteological analysis in the lab that their presence is revealed, at which time the detail of their positioning has been lost.

There seems to be no gendered preference for the placement of males or females in close contact with children, as both are found in roughly equal measure. Furthermore, the bodies of children are not always found with adults in confined spaces either, although most are found in earth cuts or coffins. In fact, the remains of four children were recovered intermixed with the remains of adults in four of the boats from Kaupang; Ka.262 [G2050], Ka.268 [G2054], Ka.294-297 [G2073], and Ka.298-300 [G2074]. This further supports the observation that physical contact was not a result of limited burial space. It could be that children were conceptualised as requiring care and protection in the grave; others have suggested similarly for the co-burial of children with adults or the use of protective structures and objects in child burials (Crawford 1999; Lee 2008; Meijsholm 2008; McGuire 2019:23), but this is somewhat countered by the fact that in a few cases, children have been accompanied by dismembered adults, such as in Ka.316/317 [G2087] and Ka.298-300 [G2074] at Kaupang and at Cloghermore [G1913] in Ireland.¹⁵ This seems to contradict the 'adult as protective carer' interpretation. In fact, there is an argument to be made that these children may have been viewed as either powerful agents or vibrant objects, due to their inherent vitalities and potentialities. This may have necessitated co-burial with a suitable partner to moderate the power of the child.

Multiple burials containing bodies in contact are fairly evenly split between the contemporaneous and consecutive types, figuring five and six burials respectively. We might expect many more individuals within contemporaneous burials to demonstrate contact, particularly for the fact that those handling the

¹⁵ Although the intentionality of the inclusion of the remains of two children with two Viking Age males (one articulated and the other represented solely by a range of dismembered parts) could be contested (cf. Connolly et al. 2005:60).

bodies could arrange the deceased in interaction with each other if so desired. Mui (2018) has demonstrated that the composition of a burial tableau in which individuals appeared to lay asleep together was an important emotional, performative and embodied aspect of the Anglo-Saxon contemporaneous multiple burial tradition. However, the fact that a small majority of these burials are consecutive may indicate that a core part of the funeral performance involved a confrontation with corpses in varying states of decomposition.

The phenomenological aspect of these burials may have been quite distinctive compared to contemporaneous or antecedent burials. While the distinctive visual, olfactory and auditory qualities of these earlier burials would produce evocative associations for those witnessing the funeral, another aspect which should not be discounted is the tactile element. The lowering of the deceased (who may still have resembled a living person more so than a dead one) on to the decomposing remains of another individual may have been keenly perceived by the funeral party, perhaps conjuring an empathic notion of their own bodies entering into a similar embodied engagement with death. It has already been well established that Late Iron Age communities had repeated physical interaction with the bodies of the deceased as part of prolonged funerary rituals (Klevnäs 2007, 2015c, 2016; Brookes 2010; Eriksen 2013; van Haperen 2013, 2015; Gardela 2016), however this does not mean that these experiences were common for most people. Accordingly, it may have been jarring to witness the recently deceased body, perhaps of someone you knew well, interacting with the long-deceased body of another. Moreover, based on the temporal information we have for the majority of multiple burials, there is a good chance that the mourners had no living memory of the individuals occupying the grave before the deposition of their friend. The dominance of the consecutive multiple burial has already been established in the last chapter, but an embodied,

phenomenological perspective on just what was involved in this experience brings a new perspective to a burial practice which operated within such diverse temporal bounds.

Bodily Positioning

On average, only a quarter of all individuals in single and multiple burials had the positioning of their bodies recorded at time of excavation. This small number reflects the antiquity of many of these records, but also the fact that it is only possible to ascertain bodily placement archaeologically from inhumations. However, this figure does allow a somewhat cursory comparison of the placement of bodies in both single and multiple burials to establish whether bodies were treated differently in each context, perhaps shedding light on how they were perceived in their community and other specific aspects of each ritual process. Table 33 shows the frequency of body positions in relation to single and multiple burial.

The most common form of positioning used in Viking Age burials is the extended or flexed configurations, and these dominate the positionings recorded for both types of burial. However, there seems to be a marked decrease in the use of these standard modes in multiple burial contexts. Of particular interest is the disparity between the frequency of flexed positioning between single and multiples burials; it is the least common positioning in multiples, with crouched and other more unusual forms being favoured in its stead.

Position	Placement	Single Burial			Multiple Burial		
		Freq. (n= 471)	Rel. Freq. (%)	Rel. Freq. (%)	Freq. (n= 58)	Rel. Freq. (%)	Rel. Freq. (%)
Extended	Supine	376	79.8	82.0	35	60.3	70.7
	On Side	9	1.9		6	10.3	
	Prone	1	0.2		0	0.0	
	Unknown	0	0.0		0	0.0	
Flexed	Supine	14	3.0	8.9	1	1.7	1.7
	On Side	26	5.5		0	0.0	
	Prone	0	0.0		0	0.0	
	Unknown	2	0.4		0	0.0	
Crouched	Supine	0	0.0	1.3	1	1.7	6.9
	On Side	1	0.2		3	5.2	
	Prone	1	0.2		0	0.0	
	Unknown	4	0.8		0	0.0	
Other	Seated	1	0.2	7.9	1	1.7	20.7
	Twisted	2	0.4		2	3.4	
	Disarticulated	30	6.4		9	15.5	
	Removed	4	0.8		0	0.0	

Table 33. Frequencies of bodily positioning between SBs and MBs. Positions unknown for n= 1636 (or 77%) of SBs and n= 156 (or 73% of data) for MBs.

We might expect the increase in crouched individuals in multiple burials as there would be less space for subsequent interments to be made in already occupied contexts. However, if that was the case, we would probably see an increase in the number of flexed burials also, which is clearly not the case. But, these numbers also include the antecedent deceased, which in most cases did not appear to have been manipulated at the time of the Viking Age interment. Thus, the greater frequency of non-standard positioning in multiple burials may simply reflect the differing depositional practices observed by communities over the last few thousand years.

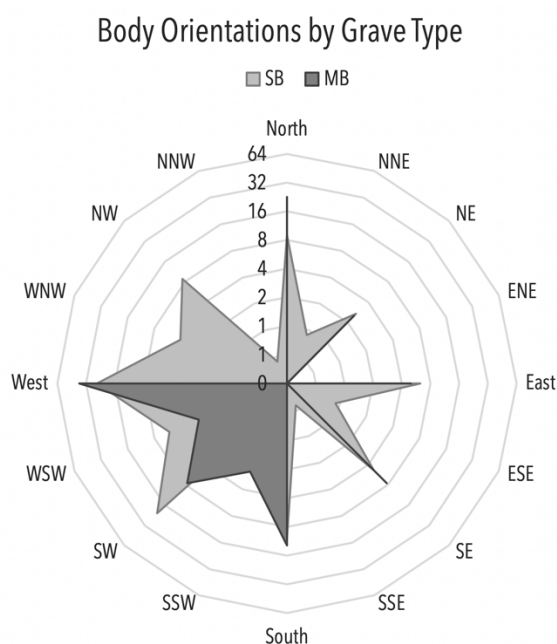
	Single Burial (n=428)	Relative Freq. (%)	Multiple Burial (n=46)	Relative Freq. (%)
Supine	390	91	37	80.5
On Side	36	8.5	9	19.5
Prone	2	0.5	0	0

Table 34. Frequencies of body positioning between SBs and MBs in relation to the three major modes of placement.

If we look at the prevalence of placements, irrespective of the positions they relate to (i.e. extended, flexed, and crouched), there is relatively little difference between the types of placement used for individuals in both types of burial (Table 34). The slight preference for the side placement of individuals in multiple burials could be due to reduced available space within the cut, however this cannot be stated with confidence. Interestingly, the occurrence of prone placement in the single burials and its complete absence in the multiple burial corpus may help to dispel concepts of deviancy attached to multiple burial, however there are obviously examples which exhibit prone individuals elsewhere in Scandinavia (Taylor 2005; Arcini 2009; Gardeła 2015; Toplak 2015, 2018; Jensen 2016; Ruiter and Ashby 2018) so a wider sample of multiple burials would be required to test this connection further.

There are some differences observable between the frequencies of bodily orientations used for individuals in single and multiple burials (Figure 19). This was calculated from burials for which the head direction of the deceased was recorded. This produced data from a total of 265 inhumations, of which 40 were interred in multiple burials and the remaining 225 were buried singly. Individuals were most commonly placed with their head in the west in both types of burials, however, the second most frequent orientation for single burials is the South-West, which does not feature as prominently in the multiples. Instead, the second most common orientation for these individuals was the north. Single burials show a much greater variety of bodily orientations in general and, as is to be expected, a greater number of individuals buried in this fashion. However, in general it appears that the individuals in multiple burials are not oriented significantly differently to single burial individuals, further calling in to question their classification as deviant.

Figure 19.
Relative frequencies of bodily
orientations based on head position for
multiple and single burials. For ease of
plotting, a logarithmic scale was used
with a base of 2.



The comparatively high relative proportion of other forms of positioning observed in both single and multiple burials (8% and 21% respectively) may confirm the view that Viking Age burials adhere less to a common orthodoxy of practice than other analogous contexts. The increased instance of other positionings exhibited in multiple burials probably reflect two further elements which need to be considered. Firstly, this figure includes the positioning of the antecedent inhumations (where known) which may have been more typical for the period in which they were interred. But, the high proportion of disarticulation in multiple burial is probably caused by the reopening of graves for subsequent interment. It may be that individuals within multiple burials held a status which increased the likelihood that they were reopened, interacted with, and manipulated (a practice common across the Viking world) than those in single burials. Evidence from the previous chapter certainly suggests that these individuals possessed a quality which saw them buried relationally across (sometimes considerable) temporal scales.

Persons Through Multiple Burial

A number of interesting trends have emerged from the analysis above, pointing to the operation of many possible modes of personhood articulated through the treatment and deposition of bodies in multiple burials. Firstly, bodies in multiple burial show a greater degree of trauma than bodies in single burials. Rather than being explained as a deviant characteristic of multiple burial practice, the nature of the wounds appears to have resulted from engagement in combat, an interpretation which is also supported by the geographical distribution of these cases throughout the lands of the Western Diaspora. But bodies in multiple burials were not only militarised— in a number of cases it appears that bodies were also *ritualised*.

Perhaps the most significant of observed trends regarding bodily treatment is the increased frequency of seemingly ritually treated bodies in multiple burials. This may be the case with the female from Ballateare [G2012]. Although the manner of her death (brought about by incisive trauma to the head) follows the wider pattern of battle-related death identified in the British burials, the manner of her deposition suggests otherwise. She was killed some time before burial and her placement, using the opposite orientation of the man above which she was buried, and on a platform covered with cremated animal remains, indicates that some sort of ritual practice was likely her demise. How are we to understand her bodily and funerary treatment in relation to her personhood (or lack thereof)? Did it confirm or transform her ontological status in the eyes of her community? Was her treatment based upon a perceived lack of personhood during life, having been conceptualised as an object like the animals with which she was buried, as suggested by Wilson (2008:33)? It is possible the animals possessed personhood while the woman did not. Or was the funeral transformative— and the treatment

and arrangement of her body served as a means of de-constituting her personhood? Was the fragmentation of her head and the possible retention of the severed piece of her skull a process of disembodying her personhood?

Could a similar ritual motivation be suggested for the dismembered men in the sample? The only three certain cases of dismemberment relate to three adult males [G1913, G2074, G2087], each interred with a child. These burials exhibit a strong connection with time; one is an antecedent burial in Ireland, while the other two occur in two of the longest continuously used burials at Kaupang. The very nature of the adult-child combination alone encapsulates a temporal quality. But how should this be read in terms of the personhood for both the children and the men? From the arrangement analysis of all individuals, it seems that no child was ever placed in their own personal space, i.e. without someone accompanying them. Perhaps this indicates that they were not yet fully 'persons' and possessed a type of personhood which had to be mutually constituted by others in multiple burial? Perhaps the reverse is true, and these were powerful children, as suggested by Lillehammer (2016), whose agency required ritual reconfiguration enacted by the deposition of a dismembered adult male? These questions are thought-provoking and will be returned to in greater detail in the discussion of Chapter Seven.

What we can conclude is that the ritual treatment of some individuals within the multiple burial sample may signify that these individuals were not considered as full social persons on the same ontological footing as others who were shown vastly different treatment in burial. This leads us to question

whether their bodies became a form of 'vibrant matter'¹⁶ (sensu Bennett 2010), or whether their personhood was involved in the collective reconfiguration of personhood for all of those interred. These individuals certainly remain an integral element within the relational webs constructed within multiple burials, but if they are more like things than people, perhaps we should decentralise our focus on people and look more closely at 'persons' (in an ontological sense) within these burials. On the basis of this observation, it would be fruitful to survey Viking Age burials to see whether we can identify other possible 'persons' which may not have taken human form.

¹⁶ According to Bennett (2010:viii) the ontological distinction between inert matter and the vibrancy of biological life, held in opposition in a modern Western perspective, often fails to acknowledge the vibrant capacity of things to effect their own agency by possessing their own 'trajectories, propensities, or tendencies'. Eriksen's (2017) conceptualisation of infants as vibrant things in Iron Age Scandinavian house deposits is an excellent archaeological example of Bennett's premise.

Animal–Human Multiple Burials

A growing body of work has emerged over the last few decades that attempts to rebalance the anthropocentric focus of research in the social sciences by exploring non-human agency and the alternative ontological structures that give rise to the unfamiliar and challenging phenomena with which we are presented in archaeological contexts (Mannermaa 2008; Argent 2010; Russell 2011; Lindstrøm 2012, 2015; Overton & Hamilakis 2013; Boyd 2017; and for more generally in the social sciences, see Haraway 1991, 2003, 2008; Viveiros de Castro 1998; Ingold 2000, 2006, 2016; Wolfe 2003; McFarland & Hediger 2009). One particular focus has been to reconceptualise the role of animals in past societies beyond their practical, economic and symbolic values, in response to a greater recognition of the diverse and complex entanglements that spring forth from animal–human interactions. A key outcome of this work has demonstrated that animal bodies and behaviours cannot be considered simply as resources that humans use to subsist and symbolise their mental worlds, but rather as subjects that constitute society in the same manner as humans (Hill 2013:118).

This chapter examines the evidence of animals in the burial dataset to investigate the nature of animal inclusion in Viking Age mortuary contexts. Previous archaeological research on the ontic status of animals in Late Iron Age contexts will be reviewed, particularly with respect to personhood and animist frameworks which help situate the results of the study. This will be followed by an outline of the data focusing on the manner in which animals were ritually

treated and buried alongside people in the Viking Age. The chapter will conclude with some thoughts on the relations formed between people and animals in this period and the role animals play in constituting personhood, leading to a consideration of how the potential for persons to take both animal and human shape should guide multiple burial theory.

Animals: Objects or Subjects?

The development of zooarchaeology has keenly reflected the wider theoretical movements with which the archaeological discipline has been concerned. The deposition of animals in burial contexts and other structured deposits have been investigated in line with these changing concepts. A survey of research conducted in the last twenty years clearly shows that two themes dominate how archaeologists investigate past human-animal relations: the functional aspects of human-animal relations, and the social, political and ritual symbolism with which humans imbue animals. These studies have been beneficial to broadening our understanding of past societies, however the anthropocentrism underpinning this type of research has been critiqued in recent years for its heavy focus on human agency (and the subjugation of animal actors) based on the ostensibly immutable metaphysical belief that humans have more agency than other non-human beings (Weil 2010; Overton and Hamilakis 2013; Watt 2013). This perspective has been somewhat reinforced by the archaeological discipline's object-oriented perspective (Reitz & Wing 2008). By focusing on the 'kinds, calories or constructs' of past animals, we negate the sentient agencies of these dynamic social actors (Argent 2010:157). A relational approach acknowledges the role of animals as active subjects, rather than passive objects, in constituting society (Hill 2013:117).

In recent years, archaeologists have attempted to understand how past societies perceived their place in the world as positional— or relational— rather than categorical (subject/object, humanity/animality, culture/nature). By “tracing the contextual and contingent paths along which forms come in to being, as opposed to populating the categorical spaces of assorted dualist narratives... our analytical focus [shifts] to the ways in which entities, thought of as processes rather than existents, become entwined” (Watt 2013:1). In this way, personhood can emerge, evolve, and recede in human and non-human entities through their relations with other similar or dissimilar beings. Archaeologists considering Neolithic and Bronze Age human-animal relations have been among the first to redress this imbalance by using a relational approach (Argent 2010; Armstrong Oma 2010; Losey et al. 2011, 2013). These studies show how effectively ethnographic and osteobiographical methods can be employed to reveal the intangible evidence of human-animal relations. However, this has not been widely adopted by scholars working in the Late Iron Age.

Studies of human-animal relations in the Viking Age have been dominated by work focused on the burial of horses, both with humans and without. These studies have focused, in large part, on Iceland in an attempt to address the large corpus of horse graves that exist in the region, but have also incorporated the Scandinavian colonies and homelands in some of their analyses (Shenk 2002; Oma 2004; Sikora 2004; Loumand 2006; Cross 2011; Stelter 2014; Cooke 2016; Leifsson 2018). Horse burials are most prevalently interpreted as a method of appropriating and articulating cultural allegiances and socio-political status during the establishment of new colonies across the Western Diaspora (Sikora 2004:94–97; Cross 2011:205; Cooke 2016:15; Leifsson 2018:327) and early state building in Scandinavia (Shenk 2002:82). Conversely, a number of studies have theorised the symbolic role of the horse in funerary ritual; some scholars suggest

that the horse was viewed as a mediator which held the ability to move and communicate across the boundaries between the world of humans and the gods, helping to transport the dead to the afterlife (Shenk 2002:53; Loumand 2006:133; Armstrong Oma 2018:135). This interpretation also holds true for dog burials from Late Iron Age contexts in Scandinavia (Gräslund 2004:173, 2014:44).

However, a small number of scholars are reimagining the status of animals in their relations with humans during the Viking Age. Pétursdóttir (Pétursdóttir 2007, 2009, 2010) is one such scholar who has pioneered the exploration of human personhood using a post humanist, relational framework to assess the Icelandic horse data. She has interpreted the physical intimacy shared between horses and humans interred together in Viking Age Icelandic burials as indicative of their inseparable status, pointing to their conceptualisation as one single being (Pétursdóttir 2007, 2010). Moreover, she argues that the burial of horses in their own graves (often far removed from any human burials but still within existent cemeteries) and being furnished with their own grave goods indicates that those animals were conceived of as persons (Pétursdóttir 2010).

Leifsson takes issue with this interpretation, stating that Pétursdóttir does not take in to account the violent killing of these animals, noting “it is evident from the osteological analysis that both horses and dogs were deliberately killed as part of the funerary ritual. This includes poleaxing, throat cutting and decapitation. It is not obvious how this would fit with the idea of horses being persons just like humans” (2018:30). Leifsson’s valuable findings on the Icelandic material will be incorporated more fully into the next section of this chapter, but it is pertinent to highlight here that, in the context of violence enacted against animal-persons, he is neglecting to consider numerous cases of

the ritual slaughter of humans that have been presumed for many multiple burials throughout the Viking World. Instances of the ritual killing of humans were also ostensibly violent moments within the wider burial ritual, in just the same manner as the 'ritual' slaughter of animals. However, what we perceive as violence in modern times, connoting a degree of dehumanisation, may not be an accurate categorisation of these acts for the Viking Age. If it is inconceivable to believe animals were thought of as persons because they were treated so violently in death, then the 'sacrificed' woman in the Ballateare boat burial, amongst many others in multiple burials exhibiting the same treatment, was also not a person. The degree to which she and other 'sacrificed' individuals and animals possessed personhood is another matter entirely.

The concept of animal-persons has been furthered by Lindstrøm (2012, 2015). She notes that the attribution of personal identity entails ascribing to somebody or something a form of personhood that emphasises particular individual characteristics and reinforces their capacity to enact their own agency (Lindstrøm 2015:153). These attributive practices are common to all times and spaces from the Palaeolithic onwards, and the prevalence of animal burials which resemble human burials is clear evidence that these particular animals were highly valued and could have had an attributed identity (Lindstrøm 2015:153). She concurs with Pétursdóttir's assessment that the physical intimacy of human and animal bodies in burials is expressive of closeness on a relational, emotional and personal level (Lindstrøm 2012:154). While there are many key differences between humans and animals, Lindstrøm points to recent psychological and ethologic research which show that animals have complex cognitive functions that are similar to those of humans. These include the ability to problem solve, use tools and communicate using signals, as well as having a form of self-awareness, the capacity to experience different emotional states and to form

relationships (Lindstrøm 2015:223). It is these shared qualities between humans and animals that enable the attribution of personhood to animals, evident in their deposition and treatment in burial contexts and the central position they hold within Old Norse cosmology.

These are interesting points and clearly demonstrate the reasons behind why humans may have formed meaningful relationships with animals. However, this approach seems somewhat asymmetrical in that it appreciates the animal in terms of its human qualities, and not the vibrant characteristics and agencies they bring to these relationships. Particularly, an ‘attribution’ of personhood to animals feels somewhat tokenistic, suggesting that animals were not persons before humans interacted with them. Rather, it feels the reverse is true; animals were not *like* humans, but that humans *took on* aspects of animals because of their own powerful qualities. This is quite evident in the work of Hedeager (2010, 2011) and Jennbert (2003a).

Hedeager (1999, 2004, 2005, 2010, 2011) has written extensively on the qualities of animals within Late Iron Age cosmologies, referencing the immense body of evidence found in Old Norse literature and material culture that testifies to the ontic fluidity between human and animal categories. She has approached the ontological status of animals through her analysis of the animal ornamentation depicted on metal fittings, weaponry and brooches. These items exhibit motifs that represent both animals and humans in parts and whole, both fragmented and anatomically complete, as heads without bodies and bodies without heads, but also in hybrid form, where parts of humans and animals are combined to compose one unified figure. To Hedeager, hybrid bodies are one of the clearest indications that our modern assumptions on the categorical divide between human/animal and culture/nature are not applicable to a Late Iron Age

Scandinavian world view and this ontological division has little relevance to the structuring principals of Old Norse religion and society (Hedeager 2010:117, 2011:79). That humans and animals are depicted in states of entwined hybridity and metamorphosis suggests that ‘beings’ in Old Norse contexts were conceived of as ‘not of one shape’— rather, the conceptual category of ‘person’ was socially and culturally defined in the image of both humans and animals and that they existed together within a much more fluid cosmological system than previously thought (Hedeager 2010:112–113, 117).

Jennbert has also explored human-animal boundary crossing as a major theme in her work, pointing to the use of animal names as personal names (particularly for Viking Age men) and the concept of *fylgjur* (the individual possession of an attendant or protective spirit often appearing in animal form) as phenomena which reveal the transcendence of categorical boundaries between humans and animals (2003a:215, 2011:187–188). While Hedeager focuses more on the mythological and cognitive worlds of Iron Age Scandinavians as revealed through art, she has not explicitly addressed whether animals were actually perceived as persons in their own right in burial. However, Jennbert has considered the possibility at length over the last twenty years, writing extensively on animal burials and the similarity of their treatment to that provided for the human dead (2003b:216–233, 2003a:216, 2006:137, 2011:105–112, 2014:184–187).

Jennbert’s view on the attribution of personhood to certain animals is based largely on a conceptual division between farm animals, other domesticated animals connected with the social and political elite, and wild animals:

“Animals that are herded are not buried in special graves. This applies, for example, to pigs, sheep, and goats, yet these were animals that had important practical and economic roles. The absence of these animals sets the dog, horse, and bear in a

special interpretive context. People had a special relation to these animals, and in particular to the individual animals that are buried in animal graves.”

(Jennbert 2011:106)

While separate animal graves for herded species are less common than that of horses and dogs in the Viking Age, herded animals are certainly not ‘absent’ in burial assemblages of this period, often being found in graves with humans, which will be demonstrated further in the next section of this chapter. Moreover, many archaeologists have highlighted the close relationships Iron Age farmers formed with their livestock; Armstrong Oma points out that living and working with domesticated, herded animals necessarily demands a continuous daily association, which creates a high degree of mutual familiarity and closeness (2010:177), while Knight stresses that domestication actually provides ideal temporal and spatial conditions for human-animal intimacy (2005:5).

Jennbert emphasises the centrality of farm animals to the constitution of early societies:

“When animals were domesticated, a stronger mutual dependence between humans and animals emerged. I am convinced that, as a result, animals domesticated humans and not the reverse. The animals had power of unspoken dimensions. They tamed humans, who were forced to feed them and to take care of them so that they would be healthy, give a good yield, and reproduce.”

(Jennbert 2014:189)

She captures elements of their agency well but does not extend this view to the burials she interprets from Vibyhögen in Uppland, Sweden. This particular Viking Age burial contained the partial remains of cattle, sheep, pigs, hens, and geese, as well as the articulated whole bodies of dogs, horses, and birds of prey. She interprets this burial as that of a very wealthy male warrior who must have had a personal relationship with the horses, dogs and birds of prey, all of which

participated with him in elite activities such as hunting and falconry. These animals, in an articulated and whole state, represent individuals with personhood due to their importance to the deceased. Conversely, she interprets the farm animals as representative of the affluence of his farmstead (2014:189–190). Despite viewing the elite animals— the horses, dogs and birds of prey— as beings with personhood, she believes their inclusion in the grave was not as persons in their own right but as part of the burial assemblage which is, foremost, a representation of the dead person in idealised form, a staging of the social identity of the deceased (2014:190).

For Jennbert, animal personhood is contingent on the social status of the human. Thus, she interprets dog graves, in general, as expressive of personal and emotional relations, horse graves as an articulation of prestige and status, and bear burials as a means of ritualising “the wild, the powerful, and nature” (2003b:149). While Jennbert concludes that animal burials demonstrate that some pre-Christian Scandinavians categorised themselves as equal to animals, she adds the caveat that “presumably, this group [was] the upper class, the elite, or the aristocracy”, while those humans and animals of other walks of life were perceived as ‘other’, therefore not necessitating formal burial (2014:188).

She is correct in her assertion that certain humans and animals were buried while certain others were not— it is well-established that not everyone was formally buried in a manner that remains archaeologically visible (Price 2012:259)— however I find it difficult to accept that animal personhood was defined purely within a framework of human socio-political status and wealth. The anthropocentric focus of this perspective has been discarded by some scholars working in earlier periods who have combined ethological, osteobiographical and ethnoarchaeological methods to identify possible animal-

persons in the archaeological record and open up further potentialities of human-animal relations yet to be considered.

From the studies considered here, it is clear that the majority of scholars recognise the centrality of animal beings in the mutual construction of society and the constitution of personhood. However, despite compelling ethological evidence attesting to the likeness of animal ‘bodies, brains and behaviours’ to that of humans (Lindstrøm 2012:163); the archaeologically similar burial treatment of both beings given context by extensive (auto)ethnographic research; and the ample cosmological evidence that in Old Norse society, humans and animals were often not categorised as separate ontological constructs as confirmed by literary sources and the human-animal art that decorated all aspects of material life during this period; archaeologists are still reluctant to acknowledge potential animal personhood in the past. The work of Argent, Lindstrøm and others who combine ethology, ethnography and archaeology to the question of animal personhood demonstrates that the similarities between the physical, cognitive and emotional capacities of humans *does* speak to their personhood— a personhood that is articulated most plainly through daily, non-discursive, embodied interaction with familiar animals, like that of Argent and her horse today, or the Viking Age household that shared the rhythms of their animals’ lives on the farm.

Shared modes of burial may reflect shared modes of life, and it is from this position that I want to explore whether animals and humans were considered as equal entities in burial contexts. An aspect of this enquiry also has implications for how we define the multiple burial; if, indeed, their similar treatment in death signifies a shared ontological status, then this may necessitate a reframing of the multiple burial practice, which currently disregards the presence of ‘other’ actors.

A multiple burial theory inclusive of non-human beings may allow for a wider exploration of the constitution of relational personhood in Viking Age burials and add interpretive depth to an underdeveloped multiple burial theory that needs to move beyond static interpretations of categorical identities. But first, the treatment of animal bodies in Viking Age burials needs to be reviewed, which is explored below.

Modes of Burial

In light of the above discussion demonstrating that the ontic category of 'person' could reside in either human or animal form, and even take shape in the spaces 'in-between', this chapter aims to explore the potential for animal personhood in Viking Age burials. A survey of the animal remains found in burials across all study areas of this research clearly demonstrate that the modes of animal inclusion are incredibly varied, both regionally and within the same site. This diversity probably reflects the variety of relations these animals had with the individuals and communities in which they lived. However, three major forms of animal burial can be observed in the dataset (Table 35).

Mode	Description
Whole	Animals were cremated together with the human dead; either on the same pyre or possibly on a different pyre, but collected and then added to the cremated remains of the human dead. They were variously placed in the same grave context or within the same burial structure of the human deceased.
	Animals were inhumed in a similar manner as the humans with which they were buried.
Part	Parts of animals were inhumed and configured in reference to the human dead (in various degrees), who were either inhumed or cremated.
Distinct	Animals were cremated and deposited in the same burial structure as the human dead, who had been otherwise inhumed.

Table 35. Major modes of animal deposition in Viking Age burials.

Animals were deposited either wholly or in parts in burials, physically relating to those with whom they were buried in many different ways. Like the humans in this study, whole animal bodies were sometimes placed in their own separate grave contexts or shared the same context with their companions, while parts of animal bodies were also placed in various states of corporeal interaction with their burial companions. In a number of burials, animals were cremated and deposited as discrete cremation layers, usually as scattered concentrations in the upper or lower levels of a burial structure. While these three modes of human-animal burial cannot possibly account for the breadth of human-animal relations across the region— and should not be taken as an indication that there is a hard and fast rule to differentiate between contexts where animals are animal-persons, grave goods, or participants in the funeral ritual— they do provide a starting point from which to further explore the connection between animals and persons in Viking Age society through the burial record.

The constraints of this thesis do not allow for a full exploration of the myriad ways that animals were included in these contexts, thus only a few key examples are explored in relation to the ways in which part and whole animals are buried. It should also be noted that the discussion offered here is biased towards inhumation, although there is also much value in an exploration of the fragmentation of animals in cremations, particularly when they are included on the same pyre as the deceased. Unfortunately, so little information is available about the treatment of animals in these contexts and the manner in which they are deposited in burials that very little can be said of this mode of burial in the current research. These animals constitute the third, ‘distinct’, mode of animal burial outlined above. This trend is observed on a much broader geographical and temporal basis and deserves a dedicated investigation beyond what can be achieved here. Therefore, that discussion is deferred for another day.

Before launching into an analysis of the relations articulated between parts of animals, whole animals, and humans, there are issues inherent in using such an approach which need to be addressed. Although I will discuss fragmentation theory in greater detail in the next chapter (see page 220), it must be noted that, by focusing on parts and wholes as a mode of fragmentation analysis, I do not intend to suggest that there is a naturalised ontological difference between the two. Brittain and Harris have clearly shown that the ontological distinction between a 'part' and a 'whole' is one we project on to the material and is not inherent to the nature of objects or, indeed, animals (2010:589). Wholes and parts have meaning within a functionalist point of view, where wholeness is conceptualised as the ideal or default state. But this depends in large part on one's idea of functionality and may not reflect the same conception in the past. Brittain and Harris have suggested we move away from assessing the relationships between parts and whole by focusing on what the fragments do in '*their own right*' (Brittain and Harris 2010:589, original emphasis). It is in this perspective that I approach the data presented hereafter.

Animal Bodies

A total of 284 animals, whether in whole or partial state, have been recovered from 184 Viking Age burials considered in this study.¹⁷ Of these animals, 185 individuals were buried in a whole state (89%), compared to just 22 animals (11%) being represented in part (Table 37). The deposition of a part or whole animal seems to correlate with the type of animal involved; horses and dogs are rarely represented in part, while other animals, such as cattle and pigs appear to have never been deposited wholly. These figures may not accurately reflect the

¹⁷ For further detail regarding animals in this study, see Appendix 7.

state in which cattle and other 'livestock' were deposited, as a majority of the data for these animal types is unknown. The whole or partial state of cattle is unknown for two thirds of the entire sample (n=14 out of a total 21), while this is true for an even larger proportion of pigs (75% or n=9 out of a total 12). This may be due to factors related to their interpretation and recording, i.e. the presumption that these animals reflect food inclusions, or it may reflect trends in their deposition; perhaps they were more likely to be cremated with the deceased (from which it is more difficult to ascertain depositional state).

Zooarchaeological analysis indicates that the remains of 28 animals were cremated yet not all of the humans with which they were buried shared the same treatment; 17 of the cremated animals were recovered in contexts where the human had also been cremated, while the remaining 11 cremated animals were associated with human inhumations. So, cremated animals were more likely to originate from burials in which humans were also cremated. But, when we look at the spread of animal types as relative proportions of the total number found in inhumations or cremations, horses and dogs are far more likely to be included in inhumations than the other types of animals, while no such preference is observable in the spread of animals associated with cremations (Table 36).

Animal Type	Inhumations (%)	Cremations (%)
Horses	65.5	20
Dogs	13	20
Cattle	6	25
Sheep/Goats	4.5	20
Pigs	4	10
Other	3	0
Unknown	4	5

Table 36. Proportion of each animal type associated with human inhumations and human cremations.

In human cremations, cattle, sheep and goats are as likely to be cremated as horses and dogs. This lends greater weight to the theory that the state of

deposition of animals, in whole or partial state, might be skewed by the recording techniques of the archaeologist and is not connected to the differential inclusion of animals in inhumations and cremations.

If this is the case, there may be many more cattle and pigs that were interred in a whole state for which we have little surviving evidence. It is interesting to note that this does not appear to apply to the caprine group. Sheep and goats are deposited slightly more commonly in whole rather than partial state, however all of the whole sheep originated from a single burial at Cloghermore [G1913], Ireland. Rather than indicating that sheep and goats were conceived differently from cattle and pigs in Viking Age minds, this may form a highly unique local tradition skewing the data. The depositional state of over half of the total caprine sample is unknown.

Animal Type	Whole (%)	Part (%)
Horses	97	3
Dogs	88	12
Cattle	0	100
Sheep/Goats	57	43
Pigs	0	100
Other	40	60

Table 37. The relative proportion of animals (by type) deposited in a whole or partial state. The condition of 77 animal individuals was unknown. 'Other' category comprises birds (n=2), cats (n=2) and a bear (n=1).

It is much more difficult to compare the animal and human data in relation to the state of the bodies upon deposition (i.e. whether a whole body or part of a body was placed in the burial). This is due to a number of factors. Firstly, the figures may be significantly influenced by the preconceptions of those who recovered the animal and human remains. We have already noted that certain animals are more readily viewed as food offerings or the leftovers of ritual meals, even before excavation of their remains commences. Secondly, these preconceptions also influence how we interpret the state in which these animals

were deposited; the partial deposition of 'higher order' animals (sensu Morgan 1894) is often explained as taphonomical disturbance while 'food' animals are more readily accepted as partial inclusions. This trend becomes even more pronounced when humans are recovered in incomplete states, which is not an uncommon occurrence in Viking Age contexts. It seems animals of all species are much more readily accepted as partial deposits than when human bodies are recovered as parts. Thus, it is for these reasons that a comparison of the state of deposition for humans and animals may not reflect the actual extent of fragmentation prior to deposition. However, a consideration of the data may point to some very general observations on fragmentation between humans and non-human bodies.

The relative proportion of whole and partial animal deposition compared to the same depositional trait for the human data is presented in Table 38. There is a slightly greater discrepancy between the whole or partial state of animals upon deposition as compared with the human data.

	Whole (%)	Part (%)
Humans	98	2
Animals	89	11

Table 38. Relative proportion of whole and partial animal deposition compared to human data.

A total of 207 animals could be reasonably inferred either to have been deposited in a whole or partial condition at the time of excavation or upon later zoo-osteological analysis, the majority of which were deposited whole. Substantially fewer animals were represented by a single element (i.e. a tusk, an antler or a single femur) or group of bones forming an appendage (i.e. a foot, a head or a wing). However, the general trend does not differ as significantly as we might expect.

	Same Context (%)	Different Context (%)	Different Structure (%)
Human-Human Burial	61	34	5
Animal-Human Burial	66	32	3

Table 39. Relative frequencies of context use for deposition of animals in relation to humans, as compared to same spatial format used in human MBs. Context unknown for n=21 animals.

Of all of the animals represented in this study, it was possible to infer how the animal was buried in relation to the human deceased in 263 cases. Using the same categories as applied to the human data, animals were deposited most commonly in the same context as the human, occurring in 173 burials, and in either their own context or an entirely different but related structure in a total of 83 burials and 7 burials respectively. Comparing these figures in relative proportion alongside those from the human data presented in the previous two chapters (Table 39), it appears animals are interred in relation to humans using a remarkably similar format as that observed in the human multiple burials.

Whole Bodies

This section explores trends observed in the deposition of whole animals, with a focus on examining the ways in which animal and human bodies were treated and deposited together in Viking Age burials. The previous section established (with the caveat that some methodological bias may have influenced the data) that horses and dogs were the most frequent type of animal to be interred in a whole state (Table 37). Accordingly, it may be inferred that horses and dogs were perceived differently from other animals by Viking Age communities, an inference supported by previous scholarship related to both horses (Gjessing 1943; Müller-Wille 1970; Sikora 2004; Loumand 2006; Pétursdóttir 2010; Cooke 2016; Armstrong Oma 2018; Leifsson 2018) and dogs (Prummel 1992; Jennbert 2003b; Gräslund 2004, 2014; Grieve 2012). That is not to say that this was true

for all horses and dogs, as any particular relationship between two entities can take any number of forms, but this may be the case on a more general level. Moreover, horses and dogs were not the only animals to be interred wholly; a bear was found in Ka.305 [G2077] at Kaupang, while a whole cat skeleton was found at Ingiríðarstaðir [G1737] and four whole sheep were buried with two men at Cloghermore Cave [G1913] in Ireland.

There may be a tendency to assume that wholeness necessarily equates with animal personhood, particularly because western conceptions of personhood tend to delineate the bounded and indivisible individual by the constraints of the human body. However, it could be that wholeness, in combination with other burial characteristics, may indicate that these animals held a special status, which may vary across different contexts. For example, the Cloghermore Cave burial [G1913] presents us with a mix of partial and whole animal and human bodies. This burial contained the remains of an articulated male found inhumed in a shallow earth-cut grave located at the bottom of the entrance shaft to the cave. With his body were the partial remains of another three individuals: the dismembered torso, arms, hands and feet of another adult male of the same Viking Age date, and five fragments of bone representing two juveniles thought to be from earlier pagan Irish burials.

Excavation of the grave produced evidence of four individual sheep— a new-born lamb, two individuals less than 6 months old, and an adult sheep aged 3-4 years. Although most of the bones represented prime meat-bearing areas from the sheep, there were also sufficient quantities of non-meat-bearing bones, including fragments of the skull and feet, indicating that the assemblage represented the remains of whole sheep depositions that showed no sign of having been butchered. It is unknown whether these animals received their own

earth cut graves or were placed within the human burial. Also found were the partial remains of two individual cows or oxen, and two individual pigs. Both of the pigs were not yet one year old when they were slaughtered, while the two cattle were aged approximately one year old at the time of their death. A cat jaw was also found in the assemblage however the position of its placement, along with all the other animal bone recovered during excavation of this grave, have not been published.

To summarise this, the Cloghermore burial [G1913] contained an assemblage of animal and human remains which had been buried in various states of completeness. The only whole beings to be interred were the Viking Age male and the four sheep. Beings buried in part include the remains of a further three humans, two cattle, two sheep and a cat. Without knowing the particulars regarding the manner of the deposition of the whole sheep or the partial animal and human remains, we could venture that the four sheep and the human male had more in common than with the other partial human remains in the burial.

There is also curious overlap between the number of humans represented in the burial and the number of sheep interred whole, as well as the juxtaposition of the youth of most of the animals, the youth of the two 'pagan Irish' children, and the adulthood of the men. What do the complex relationships between differential bodily fragmentation and the juxtaposition of age mean to communicate in this burial? Those that excavated the cave suggest that the male burial was most probably the last to be made in the cave, located as it was immediately before the entrance shaft, while the chamber in which it was placed seemed to be reserved solely for his grave. The excavators interpreted the burial as a part of the ritual closing or decommissioning of the cave (Connolly *et al.* 2005:57). To my mind, the only certainty is that both humans and animals were

similarly presented as parts and wholes, referencing a similarity in corporeal and perhaps ontological structure.

Bodily Arrangement

Table 40 shows the placement of whole horses and dogs in relation to the burials of the humans with which they were interred. Remarkably, horses are buried in their own grave as often as they are buried within a single human grave. Moreover, the combined total of horses buried in a different context or separately in a different burial structure equals 72 horses, demonstrating that horses, more often than not, are treated with a degree of independence in death. The opposite is true for the whole dogs in this sample, who are very rarely interred in contexts without their human companions. In only two instances is it thought that they were interred in a different context, and in each case, they shared the separate grave with a horse. The fact that they were never buried alone suggests that they may have been perceived as an entirely relational entity, while horses were conceptualised to possess a greater degree of independence.

Relation to Human	Horses (%)	Dogs (%)
Same Context	47	90
Different Context	48	10
Different Structure	5	0

Table 40. Relative frequencies of whole horses and whole dogs in spatial relation to the human deceased.

Occasionally, the remains of more than one horse have been recovered from a single context; this was found in the grand boat chamber burial at Hedeby, where a grave outside of the central chamber contained the remains of three horses. However, this practice occurs more commonly in Iceland, where Leifsson (2018:294) has identified a total of 25 burials which securely contained the remains of more than one horse.

One may think that in these cases, the horses would be accompanied by more than one human. This was certainly the case at Hedeby. However only five of the Icelandic multiple horse burials were found to contain multiple humans (Austarhóll [G1596], Ingiríðarstaðir 2 [G1736] Litlu-Núpar [G1795], Ytra-Garðshorn [G1889]). Consequently, there seems little correlation between the number of horses interred and the corresponding number of humans. This may be interpreted in any number of ways, however I am of the opinion that this speaks to the individuality of the horses in the Icelandic context. If the number of horses in relation to humans resulted in a 1:1 ratio, one could interpret their inclusion in burial as a standard element of the funerary ritual, perhaps (as is commonly interpreted) a mode of transportation to the afterlife. The fact that their burial occurs regardless of the number of human deceased points to a level of independence, indicating that the spatial rationale underscored the specific identity of the horses involved, or the specific relationship they had with the deceased.

When whole animals are placed in the same context as humans, the manner in which they are placed seems relatively standardised. In almost all cases, the animal body is placed at the feet of the human, with their bodies following the same axial line. Leifsson (2018:292) has identified that almost all of the horses in his Icelandic sample were positioned with the rump (or croup) of the horse towards the feet of the human, i.e. forming a mirror image so that each occupant's head was at either end of the grave cut (Figure 20.a). This accounts for most of the horse burials in this study's sample, however there are exceptions; two horses that may have been interred in the chamber at Hedeby [G1052] would have to have been placed in parallel with the human bodies to fit, while the horse at Sedgeford [G204] was at the head-end of the burial (see Figure 21).

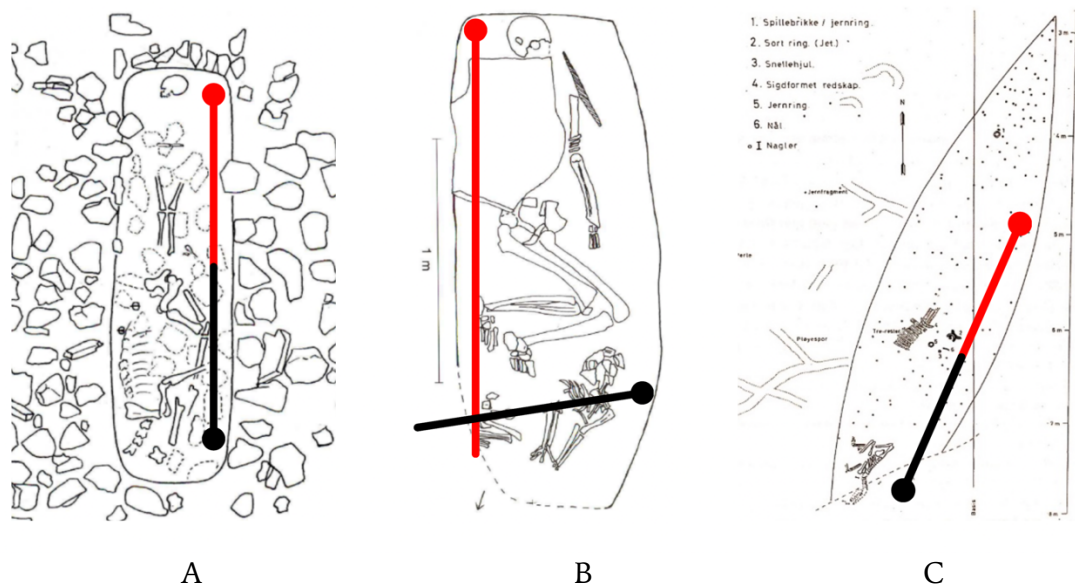


Figure 20. Bodily arrangement of animals with humans. Red line denotes human bodily orientation, black lines denote animal bodily orientation. Circular terminations indicate orientation of the head. A) Mirrored human and horse in Gr.3 at Ytra Garðshorn (after Eldjárn & Friðriksson 2016:157 mynd.68). B) Perpendicular human and dog in Gr.2 at Vað (after Kristinsdóttir 1988:93). C) Mirrored human and dog in Ka.218 (after Blindheim & Heyerdahl-Larsen 1995:52 fig.49).

Dogs seem to be placed in more relative terms to the human deceased, with a greater number of them being placed perpendicularly to the human's body, but still residing at the foot end of the grave cut (Figure 20.b). This is observed at Vað [G1882] in Iceland, at Machrins [G2316] in Scotland, and in Ka.246 [G2073] at Kaupang. There are also exceptions to this general rule, as demonstrated by the mirrored placement of the dog in Ka.218 [G2126] at Kaupang, which imitates the arrangement of most horses (Figure 20.c). In general, it seems that bodily contact was less of a guiding principle in animal-human burials than spatial independence. Most animals and humans seem to have been buried with respect to their own personal space, even when they occupied the same context. However, this was clearly not the case for all humans and animals.

Bodily Contact

A total of 19 animals appear to have been buried sharing bodily contact with the human deceased, the majority being horses (n=11) but a considerable number involving dogs too (n=8). For the greater part, the animals were placed either upon or touching the human's feet, as observed in burials located in Iceland; Dalvík Brimnes [G1637; G1638; G1640; G1643], Sílastaðir [G1819; G1822], Traðarholt [G1875; G1877], Ytra-Garðshorn [G1891] and Þorljótsstaðir [G1870]. The English and Scottish examples seem to demonstrate a greater degree of intimacy, although occurring less frequently, at Heath Wood, Sedgeford and Machrins. The Heath Wood [G162] example is a little ambiguous; the whole remains of a horse and a dog (amongst the partial remains of other animals) were found amongst the cremated remains of a human female and an infant in Mound 50. It is unclear whether they were cremated on a separate pyre and subsequently comingled with the human ashes, or shared the same pyre as the human deceased, in which case we might presume a considerable degree of contact occurred. In either case, contact between the horse and dog was maintained, which may be significant.

The Sedgeford and Machrins burials are far clearer examples of intimate contact between human and animal bodies. At Sedgeford [G204], excavations in 1997 revealed the inhumation of a female, approximately 30 years-old, who had been placed in an extended, supine position with her head resting on a horse's rump. The horse was a male, aged approximately five years old, and appeared to be serving as a pillow for the woman in an expression of considerable mutual affection (Figure 21).

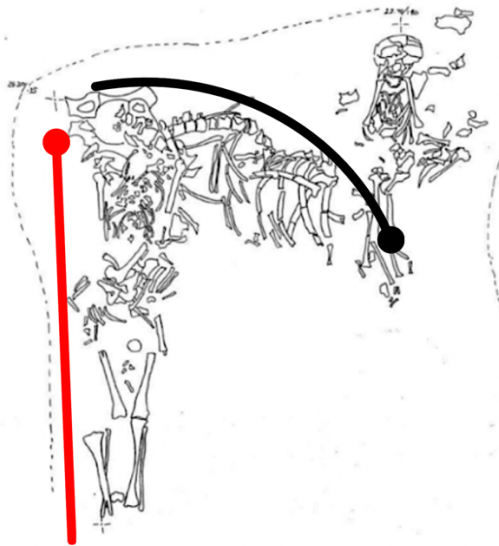


Figure 21. Female laying her head on the rump of her horse at Sedgeford, England (after Cross 2011:203 fig.4).

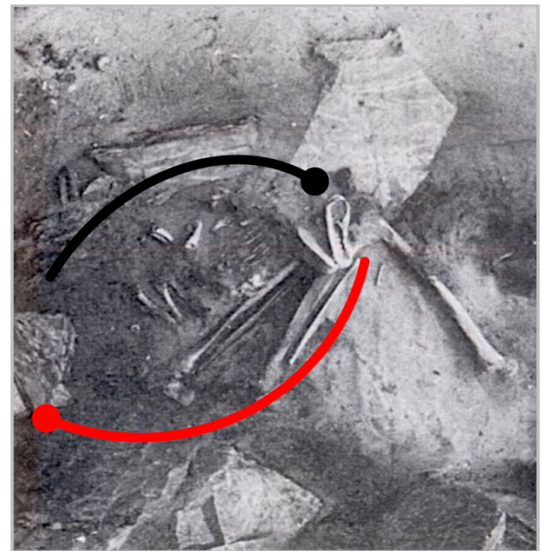


Figure 22. Dog curled up with head on female's lap at Machrins, Scotland (after Ritchie et al. 1981:282 pl.14).

A similar image of intimacy is presented in the Machrins burial [G2316] in Scotland. Here, a dog was found to be lying with its head on the knees of a mid-adult female as she lay flexed on her right side in a cist (Figure 22). The dog had apparently been a small breed, possibly female and no more than 6 years of age and was probably well fed in the day leading up to its death, evidenced by the many coprolites found amongst its remains.

The 19 animals which are buried in bodily contact with the human deceased makes up approximately 21% of animals buried in the same context as humans. In other words, almost one fifth of animals buried alongside humans are placed in close relation to human bodies. How does this compare to the human data in multiple burials? As we have seen in the previous chapter (p.162), 43 humans are placed in direct bodily contact with other human individuals within multiple burials. A total of 144 individuals could have been arranged in contact with each other (128 individuals sharing the same context and a further 16 individuals in the same context across multiple burials comprised of different structures), however just 30% of them were.

	No. of Bodies	Rel. Freq. (%)
Humans	43	30
Animals	19	21

Table 41. Relative proportion of bodies placed in contact with others in burial.

While this figure is greater than the total relative proportion for animals, bodily contact occurs in relatively similar proportions of burials (Table 41). Physical contact occurs in a minority of cases for both animal–human and human–human multiple burials, indicating that contact was only used in particular, perhaps meaningful, circumstances.

The manner in which the animal bodies are placed is quite different from that of the majority of human bodies that are in contact. The point of contact between humans and animals usually takes place at the human's feet and the animal's front or back end, but there are exceptions. Horses are more commonly placed with their croup (back end) to the feet of the human while dogs usually have their prosternum or withers in close contact (front end). This might be a matter of manoeuvrability; it would seem far easier to place a dog in an intimate position with a body than a much larger animal like a horse. This might be achieved more easily if the horse was deposited first and the human afterwards (as is the case at Sedgeford [G204]). But their positioning in this manner may have intended contact to occur at specific places on the body, particularly between parts of the body through which an embodied knowledge of the other emerged through repeated and habitual co-action.

Conversely, bodily contact between human bodies is much more comprehensive. A total of 18 burials contained human individuals who were placed in physical contact with those with whom they shared the grave, numbering 43 individuals in total. In half of the cases, the contact was visible from the remains of the

burials, but possible contact has been inferred for the remaining nine burials which were disturbed. In the confirmed cases, most human bodies are in full contact with each other, being laid partially or fully on top of each other, as seen at Repton (Figure 24).

Only in two of the confirmed burials was a lesser degree of contact observed; at Kaupang the two unfurnished individuals found together in an informal earth cut (Ka.275/276 [G2059]) appeared to be holding hands, with Individual 3 grasping the arm of Individual 2, while the male and female found in burial Sch. Gr.2/3 [G602] at the harbour of Hedeby were found with the female laying upon the right arm of the male (Figure 17 and Figure 18).

The high degree of contact that appears the norm in the human-human data is not observed in the animal-human data. In these cases, never more than around a quarter of each individuals' bodies are in contact with each other. However, it is interesting to note that, when more than one whole animal is placed in a single context, their bodies do exhibit more comprehensive contact like that observed between humans. The three horses buried in the separate horse grave located to the east of the famous chamber grave left an imprint of their positioning in the soil (although nothing of their remains survived) indicating that they were all looking westward back towards the chamber, having been laid partially on top of each other (Figure 23). This is an arrangement which has also been observed in the double horse burials at Austarihöll [G1596], Ingiríðarstaðir 2 [G1736] and Lómatjörn [G1777] in Iceland.

The stacking of two or more horses may be interpreted as a space- and energy-saving practice, but it could also be read in connection with the practice observed in partial to full bodily contact between humans. Perhaps this indicates that the

underlying rationale governing the arrangement of animal and human bodies involved an assessment of like-for-like, where the greater the similarity of 'being', the greater the degree of bodily contact.



Figure 23. THG east of Hedeby boat chamber grave [G1052] (Excerpt after Arents and Eischmidt 2010:344 taf.46).

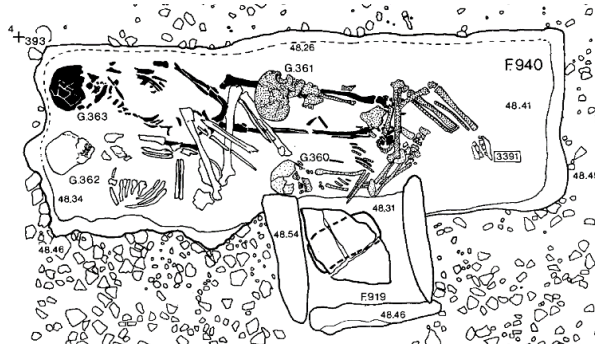


Figure 24. Burial of four subadults lain upon each other in Gr.360-363 at Repton [G192] after Kjølbye-Biddle and Biddle (1992:48 fig.9)

If this is so, it may support the inference that animals and humans were perceived to inhabit ontologically disparate categories in burial contexts, however this does not preclude the possibility that each type of being did not possess personhood. In fact, that both beings are treated in the same manner when buried with others suggests that there is some commonality in ontological status.

Bodily Treatment

In the previous chapter, the treatment of human bodies in multiple burials was explored, showing that individuals in multiple burials were more likely to experience trauma as cause of death and post-mortem dismemberment than individuals buried singly. Individuals in single burials were more commonly decapitated (based on the very small sample of three cases) and more often restrained using boulders and bindings. The individuals in these types of burial are often conceptualised as deviant, however I would argue that similar practices

identified amongst the buried animal population further counters that interpretation.

A total of 15 animals showed evidence of decapitation and/or dismemberment (not including the numerous animals who were buried in parts). Almost all of these individuals are horses from Iceland, however a few horses, a bear and a dog from Kaupang also exhibited decapitation and dismemberment. Based on this study's data, decapitation and dismemberment were not evenly practiced. Only two cases were identified at Kaupang where a horse and a dog were decapitated and dismembered, while all of the other animals were just decapitated. When comparing these figures with that of the human data, little similarity is observed (Table 42).

	Abs. Freq.	Rel. Freq. (%)
Humans in MB	4/214	1.9
Humans in SB	3/2107	0.15
Animals	15/185	8.1

Table 42. Frequencies of dismemberment and decapitation.

Clearly, animal bodies were more readily conceived of as partible, which is not surprising considering how often they are depicted in various states of fragmentation in the animal art of Late Iron Age metalwork (Figure 25).¹⁸ However, the fact that fragmentation occurs more readily to humans in multiple burials over single burials suggests that those particular humans may have played a similar role to animals in these contexts. This may be taken as evidence that the personhood of humans within multiple burials was conceptualised as more partible than other people in society, which may explain why these particular people are buried in a relational way. The capacity to accommodate or

¹⁸ As the sample of dismemberment is so small, evidence of decapitation and dismemberment have been combined in both the animal and human data to aid comparison.

transition to a partible self may be something these humans share with animals; and may mean that their personhood was constituted in the image of the Dividual, partible animal, rather than the indivisible human.



Figure 25. A human individual composed of numerous animal bodies on a mount from Vendel grave 1. Drawing by O. Sörling (Stolpe and Arne 1927: pl. IX). After Hedeager (2011:74 fig.4.19).

This interpretation is further supported by the general trend of animal inclusion in human single and multiple burials. As we have seen in Chapter Three, human multiple burials constitute just 4.1% of the entire corpus of burials. Conversely, graves containing one or more animal make up a much larger proportion of the corpus at 8.4% and, while a significant number of these burials contain a single human interment (84%), at least 30 of the total 185 animal graves contained more than one human (16%). In fact, in relation to the total number of multiple and single burials, the inclusion of animals in burials containing more than one human are considerably more frequent— 33% of multiple burials contain animals compared to just 7% of single burials (Table 43).

Study Area	Multiple Burial		Single Burial	
	No. Animal Burials	Rel. Freq. (%)	No. Animal Burials	Rel. Freq. (%)
England	4	33	8	7
Mann	2	100	3	13
Scotland	0	0	12	9
Ireland	2	50	7	7
Iceland	11	61	111	38
Kaupang	10	40	12	9
Hedeby	1	5	2	0
Total	30	33	155	7

Table 43. Relative proportion of MBs and SBs containing animals.

A traditional interpretation may hold that multiple burial has a strong connection with the elite of Viking Age society, thereby viewing the greater inclusion of animals in these burials as an exercise in conspicuous consumption. However, there may be more to these figures that cannot be explained taking a socio-economic perspective. While there are variations in the proportion of animal inclusion on a regional basis, at a broader level the data seems to suggest that, in funerary contexts where the burial of multiple individuals is considered appropriate, animals are also frequently included in that rationale, more so than in instances where humans are buried singly. Therefore, there seems to be a connection between the prevalence of fragmented humans in multiple burials, the partible quality of animals and a greater preference for the inclusion of animals in multiple burial contexts. Let us explore this further in relation to animal parts deposited with humans in Viking Age burials.

Body Parts

A much broader range of animals are represented by parts in this research. As we have seen, horses and dogs dominated the group of animals who were buried whole, however this was not the case for individuals represented by a single part. Of all animal parts deposited in Viking Age burials, the greatest number of them belonged to cattle. Horses were also subject to partial burial, but in far fewer numbers (just three) which is on par with the representation of sheep/goats, pigs and dogs (Table 44).

We have already noted that there is a tendency to interpret the inclusion of cattle, sheep/goats and pigs in burials as food offerings, however a review of the body parts represented demonstrate that the majority are not typical 'meat

bearing' elements. In fact, there seems to be a preference for the deposition of cranial components, particularly jaws.

Animal Type	Abs. Freq.	Body Part (Cranial)	Body Part (Post-cranial)
Cattle	7	2 jaws, a cranium, some teeth	
Sheep/Goats	3	Jaw	A shoulder
Pigs	3	Tusk, a tooth	
Horses	3	3 jaws, a cranium	
Dogs	3	A cranium, some teeth	A foot (a skin?)
Birds	2		A wing, a wing bone
Cats	1	Jaw	

Table 44. Animals represented by a single or group of part(s) with description of body part, if known.

Density-mediated attrition (Lyman 1994; Orton 2012) may be a factor here; the density of jaw bones and teeth mean they are particularly robust and survive relatively well archaeologically, which may account for their recurrent recovery in these contexts. However, on this basis, we would also expect to recover other similarly robust skeletal elements like innominate and long bones. No other skeletal elements were observed at the time of excavation and the specific taphonomical circumstances in which they were found suggested to those who excavated and analysed the remains that they were intentionally deposited as distinct and isolated parts as a component of the wider burial process.

The cranial remains of cattle found at Inchicore [G1931] and Knoxspark [G1991 and G1992] in Ireland are particularly interesting. At Knoxspark, the adult male in Gr.30 [G1991] was accompanied by a pair of cattle teeth placed deliberately under the left side of his chin near his right ear, while another adult (sex unknown) buried in Gr.80 [G1992] in the same cemetery had a cattle jaw placed just above their right leg. Excavators noted that the latter individual was placed in such a position that it appeared they had been thrown in to the grave haphazardly or possibly buried alive (Mount 2002:111). A similar deposition—although without the peculiar bodily positioning— can be observed at Inchicore

[G1931], where a single cow jawbone was placed above the head of a middle-aged adult male.¹⁹

In Mound 50 at Heath Wood [G162], England, a number of animal remains were found to have been cremated with the deceased, including a whole horse, dog, ox and sheep and part of a pig. However, amongst the cremation deposit, portions of two individuals were recovered unburnt: a single tooth of a small pony was found (although its location is unknown and it is thought to be possibly intrusive) while the whole head of a 6-year-old cow was placed on its side above the central cremation deposit, unburnt and showing no evidence of butchery or cooking. It is possible that the cow head represents some sort of food offering, however, the fact that this type of deposition is also found in another mound (Mound 1 [G146]) in the same cemetery, where a cow skull was also placed above the central cremation deposit, infers that it could also function as a part of the funerary ritual in a similar manner as the cow jaws at Inchicore and Knoxspark.

The placement of a sheep's jaw at the foot of a burial at Repton [G192] in Derbyshire seems to follow the same pattern of deposition. This grave contained the skeletal remains of four juveniles in a rectangular grave cut; placed in an extended supine position at the bottom of the cut was an 8-12-year-old child, over which were placed the crouched remains of another two children of roughly the same age, as well as the crouched remains of an adolescent individual aged approximately 17 years-old. The only object in the grave was the sheep's jaw placed at the east end of the burial. The grave, that was evidently marked by a

¹⁹ A similar case was identified at Birka, where a decapitated woman had had her head placed on her right forearm while a pig's jaw had been placed on her chest (Arbman 1940:384).

timber post at the southern edge of its cut, was located on the edge of the well-known ‘charnel deposit’ mound. The charnel deposit was located in what was probably originally a free-standing mausoleum (or mortuary house) but had been levelled to its foundations during the Viking encampment to be filled with the disarticulated remains of approximately 264 individuals (mostly males aged between 15 and 45 years old) and subsequently covered by a cairn and a kerbed mound.

The close spatial and temporal connection between the mound and the multiple burial of the four youths in grave 360-363 has been interpreted as a sacrificial burial associated with the creation of the charnel mound (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2001:74; Jarman et al. 2018:4). Harrison has interpreted the sheep’s jaw as a gift of food (2008:577), however this part of the animal cannot be considered an ideal cut of meat to serve as an offering. Rather, the repeated deposition of this singular and particular part of the horse, cow, or sheep suggests the motivations behind its placement go beyond notions of sustenance.

Apart from the teeth and crania of animals being deposited with the human dead, bird wings are also a recurrent theme, and the manner of their deposition is just as peculiar. Two burials— widely thought of as unique amongst the wider corpus of burials known from the Western Diaspora— include wing elements. The impression of a goose wing was identified during the excavation of the Pagan Lady [G2033] buried in a lintel grave in a cemetery on St Patrick’s Isle on Mann. She was approximately 40 years old female, 1.65m tall and suffered from rickets (*osteomalacia*). On her right, an iron rod was nestled next to her body and covered in textile. Seeds and herbs were found scattered in this area, as was an imprint of a goose wing that was preserved in the surrounding soil (Gardeła 2014:36).

There are various interpretations of the woman's grave goods; Wilson (2008:49) suggests the iron rod represents a roasting spit while the bird's wing was used for basting or sweeping, however there are others whose interpretations go beyond the domestic realm and believe the rod to have been the staff of a *völva* (seeress) used in performing Old Norse *seiðr* magic (Price 2002:160; Gardela 2014:36). This interpretation is supported by Harrison (2008:624–625) and Price (2002:206), who further note that the feathers, along with other unusual items in the grave, may have had a talismanic function (Figure 26).

Figure 26.
Artistic reconstruction of the
'Pagan Lady' burial [G2033].
After Gardela (2014:35
fig.11). Drawing by Mirosław
Kuźma. © Leszek Gardela and
Mirosław Kuźma.



A similar interpretation may be ventured for the deposition of a single humerus bone— originating from a jackdaw or raven— that was placed in a small bag or box between the legs of the warrior in Gr.511 [G196] at Repton. The wing bone has also been interpreted to have some sort of amuletic power by Richards (2003:4), who suggests the bone references the Norse god, Odin, by way of resembling his ravens Hugin and Munin, while Gotfredsen (2014:372) has linked the Thor's hammer necklace worn by the man with deposits containing remains of mythologically significant birds, such as eagles, ravens and other corvids. Like the mammalian crania above, the relative survival of avian skeletal elements is dependent on bone density, meaning that wing (and leg) bones survive best. However, the contextual circumstances in which both of these wings were found indicates that they were intentionally curated and deposited with the deceased.

At this point, it would be tempting to suggest that the specific placement of particular animal parts in relation to human bodies was a means of symbolising a perceived identity or quality of the human deceased. However, this interpretation denies the embodied agency of the animal itself. A critique often levelled at conventional zooarchaeologies is the anthropocentrism inherent in 'socially'-oriented forms of interpretation; animals are conceptualised within a representational logic wherein the significance of the animal is purely symbolic (Overton & Hamilakis 2013:113). The discussion at the outset of this chapter has demonstrated that recent developments within the 'animal turn' (Weil 2010) circumvent anthropocentrism by recognising the agency of animals and the embodied ways through which interspecific relationships form. To put it another way, humans and non-humans form nested relationships with other beings which blurs the origin of their collective agency.

Haraway's 'cyborgian' anthropology (1991) has particular relevance here, in that it affirms that the boundary between human and animal has been 'thoroughly breached'. For Haraway, "language, tool use, social behaviour, mental events... nothing really convincingly settles the separation of human and animal" (Haraway 1991:151–152). Instead, she emphasises the 'mutual becoming' of both humans and animals through interspecific interaction. Adopting this perspective, the image of the Pagan Lady with the goose wing at her hand presents a picture of entangled personhood; the bodies of each being merged to form a woman/goose. That is not to say that the woman and the goose were never individuals, as personhood is reconfigured in different scenarios and through different relationships, particularly in death. However, the funerary tableau presented in the grave is one of corporeal and ontological unity. This theme will be expanded upon in the succeeding Discussion chapter, but now we must explore other modes of bodily interaction.

Bodily Contact

Most animal parts are not placed in contact with the human deceased however they clearly reference the deceased's body in their deposition. Specifically, most animal parts are placed near the head or legs of the human body (Figure 27).

Aside from those who were cremated with the deceased (or subsequently comingled with their ashes upon burial) like the animals at Heath Wood, just four animal parts are placed in physical contact with their human counterpart. Where both bodies meet in these interactions may be meaningful. Admittedly, it is hard to interpret how the jaw of a cow shares a connection with the right leg of a human, but the other examples seem more explicitly linked. For example, there is a clear commonality of body parts interacting in the case of a man having the teeth of a cow tucked by one side of his jaw and the woman at Birka whose jaw may have been substituted with that of a pig (see Footnote 16).

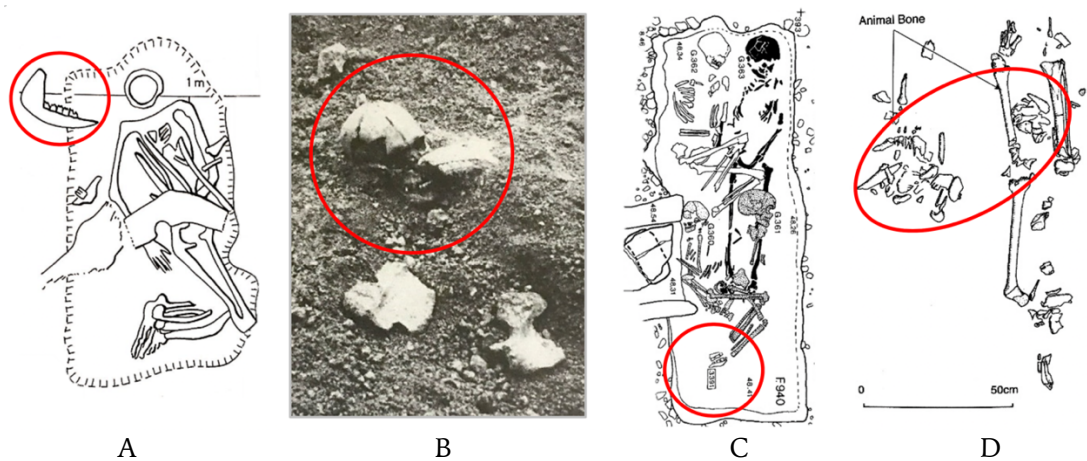
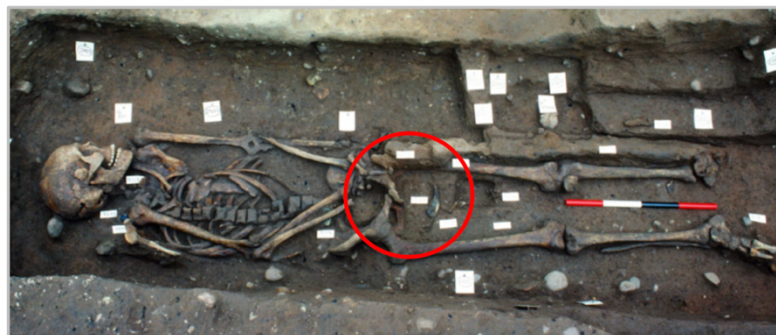


Figure 27. Placement of animal parts A) Horse jaw by head of Ka.274 [G3000]. Excerpt after Blindheim et al. (1995:79 fig.15.3). B) Cow jaw placed on face of deceased in Inchicore 1934A [G1931] in Ireland. After Harrison & O Floinn (2014:279 ill.167). C) Sheep jaw placed at feet of four subadults in Repton 360-363 [G192], England. After Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle (1992:48 fig.9). D) Butchered animal bones scattered over/around legs of individual in South Great George's Street F342 [G2002], Ireland. After Harrison & O Floinn (2014:278 ill.166).

One specific instance of animal-human interaction not yet mentioned for one of the graves we have already discussed is the deposition of a boar's tusk between the legs of the warrior at Repton. This is the same warrior male who had suffered immense trauma at the time of his death (discussed more fully in the preceding chapter on page 136) which included castration caused by a massive cut to the top of his left femur, simultaneously severing his femoral artery and removing his genitals in a single blow. In its stead, a tusk from an adult wild boar was found placed between his thighs (Figure 28). Immediately below the boar's tusk was the jackdaw humerus mentioned previously. Price has suggested that both the tusk and the wing bone were personal charms, connected by the mythological association of the boar and jackdaw with warfare and its aftermath (2002:207). However the specific placement of the tusk has led others to conjecture that it was placed in an act of compensation for the metaphorical loss of the warrior's masculinity (Hadley 2008) or was intended to fulfil the role of his genitals in case they 'proved necessary in Valhalla' (Richards 2003:4).

Figure 28. Photograph of Repton 511 showing placement of boar's tusk and jackdaw humerus. After Jarman et al. (2018:4 fig.2).



Although Richards and Hadley do not explicitly state it as such, their interpretation is based upon the assumption that part of an animal, in this case a boar's tusk, may have been conceptualised as an appropriate metaphorical or physical substitute by those who buried this man. I am of a similar opinion; however, I would argue that the boar's tusk did not act as a substitute, because the very notion of a 'substitute' maintains a distinction between the human and

non-human, the antithesis of what this specific and deliberate mode of deposition appears to be communicating. As Barad has emphasised, we must examine the practices through which the boundaries between human and nonhuman are stabilised and destabilised (2003:808). The deliberate deposition of the boar's tusk in such a manner indicates that, in this specific burial context, both boar and man were conceptualised as similar entities, perhaps formed of the same substance and therefore compositionally interchangeable. In this way, the tusk is not simply an extension of the warrior's corporeality or a symbolic 'substitute'; rather, both bodies merge to become one entity, perhaps in the vein of a cyborgian man/boar.

Thus, the personhood of the warrior male transforms into a new entity in which man and boar are fused. Like the Pagan Lady woman/goose, this may only have been true for each being at the specific moment of burial. My argument is not that man and boar were always one, or that people in the Viking Age did not distinguish between men and boars in life— alternately, I suggest that it may be that the ontological distinction between man and boar ceased to be relevant at the time of burial. And perhaps this was true for other human–animal interactions and relationships in other contexts.

Perhaps the deposition of the goose wing by the hand of the Pagan Lady in Mann was similarly conceptualised by those who performed her burial rites. There seems to be a good deal of evidence which supports her potential status as a *seiðr* practitioner, and it may be that the goose wing played an integral role in the constitution of her personhood as such. Did any of her powers originate from the wing of the goose? The placement of the wing with the other elements of her practice— by the hands that presumably interacted with them on a daily basis— demonstrate a clear intentionality, calling to mind a cyborg assemblage

in which efficacy (and, I would add, personhood) is realised through the merging of human and animal bodies, and their concomitant agencies.

The ontological status of the goose's wing and the boar's tusk challenge the interpretive categories we use to decipher the remains of the past. Both have been interpreted as objects; in the case of the wing, it has been conceptualised as baster or a talisman, essentially a tool or implement. Likewise, the tusk is an amulet or a conciliatory token. But, when each part was disarticulated, curated, wrought and deposited, were they perceived simply as tools or tokens by those who 'possessed' them? Or did they continue to be animal in nature? How much of their functionality and agential power came about because of their animal qualities? These are intriguing questions that have profound implications for the categorisation of particular deposits.

Human–Persons, Animal–Persons, and Cyborgs

This chapter has examined the various ways in which animals were treated and buried alongside humans during the Viking Age. Previous archaeological consideration of the ontological status of animals in Late Iron Age contexts have demonstrated that there was an ever-present potential for transformation and fluidity between animal and human forms (Eriksen 2019), so much so that the ontic construction of person was, as Hedeager (2010:112) has it, “not of one shape”. These observations are certainly supported by the material presented here.

Our exploration of the manner in which animals were ritually treated and buried show that they shared many of the same funerary practices as humans. Animals appear to have been more readily conceptualised as partible beings than most humans, however the fact that they share consistently similar rates of

- Fragmentation— animals being buried in part 11% of the time and humans 2% of the time
- Dismemberment— animals being dismembered 8% versus human dismemberment in 2% of cases.
- Context-use— both buried using an almost identical depositional ratio of single and different context-use (approximately 60% versus 30% respectively)

suggests that they were similarly conceived in funerary ritual.

The manner of their deposition attests to a wide range of animal–human relations. The independence with which many horses were buried, and the greater degree of relationality indicated by the positioning of human and dog bodies speaks to this point. But it was not all horses and dogs who were buried alongside humans in complex and meaningful ways; the bodies of cattle and caprine were also found entangled with human bodies in many of the burials. The Cloghermore Cave burial [G1913] is a case in point, in presenting a multifarious image of personhood articulated through concepts of age and fragmentation.

I'd like to conclude with some thoughts on the relations articulated between people and animals in Viking Age burials. There is certainly a symbolic element in the inclusion of some animals in these burials. The connection between caprine bodies, human bodies and age is one such example we have already discussed, however this seems to be a wider trend identified across England and Ireland, where individuals are interred with the remains of caprines and cattle in distinct depositions emphasising the human deceased's head and feet (Figure 27). But animals are not solely a means of signifying concepts related to the human deceased; there is also considerable evidence of animal personhood, through the depositional trends that accentuate the close, yet independent,

relationships formed between some animals and humans. The somewhat independent arrangement of horses and dogs within burials seems particularly expressive of this.²⁰ Conversely, the deposition of other animals, particularly dogs and some caprine, seem consistently governed by a concept of relationality with the human deceased but also the other animals with whom they are interred.

In some cases, the manner in which human and animal bodies merge is suggestive of the creation of a single entity, conceptualised here in a similar manner as Haraway's non-human/human cyborg. These burials present human bodies merged with animal bodies, creating an image of complete corporeal and ontological entanglement. What can be said of the constitution of personhood through the entanglement of human and animal bodies? It seems relatively clear that animals contribute much to the constitution of human personhood, particularly in relation to more traditional views which regard some animals as indicative of the status of the deceased, such as the role of birds, dogs and boars in relation to warfare and elite hunting practices (Stalsberg; 1982 Ambrosiani; 2001 Gräslund 2004; Stylegar 2007:97 Jennbert 2014:189). However, the image of animal-human relations evident in the many different burial tableaux observed in this dataset is certainly one of mutual becoming.

The cognitive and embodied agencies of these animals give rise to the persons we excavate in burials, which is reflexively true for the humans who contribute to animal-persons through their embodied, emotional, and cosmological relations. In some cases, animal/human composite forms present a mode of

²⁰ This observation is heavily influenced by the Icelandic data, which may only be representative of that specific cultural context, although the limited evidence from Scotland and Kaupang seems to reinforce this trend.

personhood which could not be achieved without the participation of the other bodies, which allow such transformations to be made. This leads to some interesting questions: How are these transformations made corporeally and ontologically? Is an element of either or both animal and human required to be parted with in that instant so that each can take on the part of the other? Or is it a movement of substances akin to permeable modes of personhood? Does personhood simply extend and envelope the other? Further exploration may help to clarify some of these questions.

Finally, the burial of animals and humans demonstrate the myriad ways that each being shapes the personhood of the other in a process of mutual becoming that extends into the mortuary sphere. In this light, I think that there is real potential for the co-creation of animal and human personhood. But how should the potential for persons to take both animal and human shape inform our current understanding of the multiple burial rite? In the first instance, we need to explore the specifics of each burial in order to understand how the relationships between burial entities construct persons. The sheer diversity of practices observed here and identified elsewhere by scholars working within the Late Iron Age mortuary arena calls for an approach which is agile, multi-dimensional, and multi-scalar, in order to engage with the heterogeneous relations that form between humans, animals and objects in these contexts. It is through these relationships that persons emerge. We have only just scratched the surface of animal–human relationships in this chapter, however we must move on now to consider the relationships that form between humans and their material worlds.

Thing–Human Multiple Burials

A number of Viking Age burials from the Western Diaspora and across Scandinavia contain objects that appear to have been deliberately 'damaged' prior to deposition. This practice is often referred to as ritual 'killing' (Grinsell 1961; Merrifield 1987 Davidson 1998 [1962]; Aannestad 2018) but the cosmological constructs that underpin the phenomenon are unclear. As yet, a broad-scale evaluation of the evidence has not been undertaken, despite the wealth of examples that have been recorded over the last two centuries. Accordingly, in this chapter I review previous considerations of the practice in Viking Age contexts and set out the parameters of my exploration adopting an interpretive framework that considers the role of objects in constructing personhood. To do so, I take an approach grounded in embodiment and fragmentation theory. Following this, I chart the practice as it is observed in the grave good data collected for this research and discuss the significance of the tradition in relation to funerary ritual, human and object bodies, and the constitution of personhood in the context of its use.

In essence, this chapter examines the relationship between modes of ceremonial modification and deposition in burials to understand the role of the practice in producing Viking Age persons. Although a variety of different types of objects exhibit intentional 'damage', including brooches, staffs and coins, the exploration undertaken here considers specifically the differential treatment and deposition of weaponry, being the most common class of object upon which the custom was practiced.

A Note on Nomenclature

A definition of the practice generally follows a functional perspective; "an object is said to be 'killed' when it has been deliberately altered in a way which prevents its functioning in its original state of completion, usually in the process of a mourning ritual" (Butterfield 2017:6). However, the practice does not always exhibit a clear connection with cosmologies surrounding death, nor is the practice restricted to mortuary contexts. Butterfield (2017) is the only scholar (of whom this author is aware) to have considered the motivations underlying the practice and its significance to past and present cultures. Her study was carried out to inform best practice in the field of conservation so that deliberate fragmentation could be better understood, identified and appropriately conserved. Accordingly, her definition hinges upon seeming 'destruction' for which she acknowledges the motivating agendas are specific to the material, intent and culture: "the term 'killed object' is therefore understood to incorporate other concepts like deliberate fragmentation, intentional breakage, and destructive creativity as the meaningful invocation of power or communication" (Butterfield 2017:6).

Because archaeologists need not be concerned with damage in the same manner as the conservator, it is important to refrain from using any designation of the practice which assumes that an object's alteration was focused on rendering it non-functional. Objects can have many 'functions' in their lives, and the modification of its form, negating its utility in one sphere of its life, does not define the nature of its existence. One must also refrain from using the term 'killed' as this presumes that modified objects were once 'alive', thereby conceptualised anthropomorphically or as animate beings. This may well be the case, but the nature of the Viking Age practice has not yet been considered

previously, so a more neutral designation based on the evidence at hand— firstly, that an object's form was somehow *modified*, and secondly, that it occurred as a part of a *ceremonial* process— allows for a wider range of potentialities to follow.

Some Background to Ceremonial Modification in the Viking Age

Weapons that have been ceremonially modified have been found in a significant number of archaeological contexts since the earliest days of European prehistory, yet the role of the practice has remained elusive. Exploration of their modification has been approached in a relatively piecemeal manner, often being touched upon in a few sentences as part of a wider discussion of grave good assemblages in site-excavation reports, or vaguely in large-scale syntheses of burial customs or ritual practices.

Most studies that mention the practice invariably proceed by describing the type of modification observed and suggesting that it is probably related to some form of prehistoric ritual. For example, Armstrong and Coffey's (1910) publication of the Hiberno-Norse weapons found at the Islandbridge–Kilmainham burial complex in Dublin was one of the first works to address the many deliberately bent and broken weapons that were recovered there at the turn of the twentieth century. Somewhat perplexed by the extreme bending exhibited by some of the sword blades, they postulated that the swords could not have been bent on discovery as was suggested, but rather it was more likely that it was the result of the “survival in certain exceptional cases of an ancient and widely distributed rite of breaking or injuring objects placed with the dead” (Coffey & Armstrong 1910:122).

Haakon Shetelig, arguably the foremost authority on Viking Age funerary customs of the twentieth century, did not attempt to interpret the act's

significance when he briefly summarised the Scandinavian phenomenon in 1912, nor a few decades later in his comprehensive review of Scandinavian archaeology with Hjalmar Falk, beyond these few lines: “In [the Early Iron Age] the custom appears for the first time of bending or rolling weapons together after burning, before they are laid in the grave, a custom which was very generally followed in Norway and Sweden during all the subsequent periods of the heathen Iron Age, but always restricted to graves with cremation” (Shetelig & Falk 1937:185, see also Shetelig 1912).

It was not until the 1950s and 1960s that greater interest in the ritual purposes of the phenomenon emerged (Grinsell 1953, 1961; Davidson 1998 [1962]). Grinsell suggested that it was the dual symbolism of ‘authority and valour’ intrinsic to weapons and their close association with the deceased that necessitated their destruction and removal from circulation (1961:477). In general, Grinsell likened the custom to traditions of human and animal sacrifice, an interpretive framework which has loomed large in the discipline to this day. Similarly, Davidson (1998:10) explained the destructive practice as a means of preparing the object for use in the afterlife by the deceased, but she also chose to highlight the great care with which these items were treated. She cites the intimate ways in which the bodies of Anglo-Saxon and Viking Age individuals interacted with swords in the grave, and the ‘honourable’ position objects were often given as the focal point of the burial. In circumstances where the body was absent, she notes, the weapons seemed to take the place of the body instead (Davidson 1998:12).

‘Deliberately destroyed’ weapons from Bronze Age contexts have been thoroughly explored from a number of angles since the early 2000s (Nebelsick 2000; Brück 2004, 2006b, 2006a; Becker 2013; Bietti Sestieri et al. 2013; Horn

2017; Knight 2018), however it has only been recently that the practice, as it appears in Late Iron Age and Early Medieval contexts, has been addressed specifically (Brunning 2013, 2015, 2017; Welton 2016; Aannestad 2018; Blakelock 2018). Of particular relevance to this study, Hanne Aannestad (2018) recently examined all of the bent swords recovered from Viking Age contexts across south-eastern Norway, for which the Museum of Cultural History in Oslo holds records. Her analysis showed that the practice was not exclusively linked with cremation graves in south-eastern contexts (although that may remain the case for the western examples as stipulated by Shetelig (1912)), but the very few examples found with inhumations indicate it was still strongly correlated with the cremation rite (Aannestad 2018:159). Furthermore, the quality of the weapons and the grave goods with which they were deposited suggest that the practice was strongly associated with the social elite and held particular relevance for warriorhood in Viking Age society (Aannestad 2018:165). Her study serves as a valuable comparative foil for the research presented here and allows for a more thorough exploration of its role in transforming identities and constituting personhood in death.

A Conceptual Framework for Objects

The role of objects in the constitution of personhood is a well-established facet of modern archaeological thought (Fowler 2004, 2010; Jones 2005; Chapman 2008; Jones and Boivin 2010; Marshall 2013). Approaches that have proven particularly valuable in exploring the role of things in constituting personhood include concepts of *embodiment* (Csordas 1990; Meskell 1996, 1999, 2000; Joyce 1998; Montserrat 1998 Rautman 2000; Hamilakis and Pluciennik 2002; Fisher and Loren 2003), *fragmentation* (Chapman 2000, 2008; Chapman and Gayadarska 2006; Brittain and Harris 2010), and *object biography* (Kopytoff 1986; Hoskins 1998; Gosden and Marshall 1999).

As we have seen in previous chapters, personhood is constituted through a person's relationships and engagements with their material and cosmological worlds (Fowler 2004:4). Objects play an integral part in the mediation of relationships between these entities and thereby are of vital importance to the constitution of one's personhood. Moreover, objects can be thought of as the material form of the relationships they mediate in life. In this way, they carry with them "a part of each person who has authored their history" (Fowler 2004:33). Following from this, they become inalienable from the concepts bundled up in their being, and so have the ability to take on social identities and become 'persons' in some contexts (Fowler 2004:33). So how should the practice of ceremonial modification be viewed through this lens?

One perspective conceives the practice of ceremonial modification as a ritual process through which personhood was transformed. Pertinent to this discussion is an understanding of funerary ritual. Ritual is the medium through which the relationship between humans and "non-immediate sources of power, authority, and value" are invoked (Bell 1997:xi). Sources of power, authority and value (shortened here to the Source) usually include supernatural entities but can also be extended to other religious and non-religious concepts (i.e. the monarchy) and abstract forces, such as power and luck (Fogelin & Schiffer 2015:818).

Objects become interwoven into the relationship between people and the Source through their use in ritual activities; collectively they serve as a ritual technology (Walker 2001). Ritual technology plays an important role in the performance of rites of passage over the course of human lives. In his seminal anthropological work *Rites of Passage* (1960), Van Gennep establishes that human life is

constituted by a series of transitions (or passages) through which individuals move between social positions. Ritual objects, and the ceremonies within which they participate, mark each passage and enable persons to pass from one defined position to another (Van Gennep 1960:3).

However, while this interpretation demonstrates how objects produced and transformed persons through ritual, it does not explain why these particular objects were chosen from amongst many other possible candidates. An object biographical approach may help in this endeavour. Object biography is ultimately a relational approach because it traces the relationships that form between people and things, seeking to understand the manner in which objects become invested with meanings and how these meanings are transformed over time. Moreover, this approach also assumes that objects have their own social relations with the world, forming a social life made up of stages, just like human lives are conceived of as a series of rites of passage (Burström 2014).

The work of a number of scholars has explored the potential personhood of Viking Age weaponry by focusing on particular stages of their life course; some have focused on their materiality and the technological processes through which they were given life (Goldhahn and Oestigaard 2008; Welton 2016), while others have studied their treatment in relationships with humans in life (Brunning 2013, 2017) and the manner of their deposition in death (Lund 2009, 2015, 2017; Sayer et al. 2019). These object biographies call into question the divide between objects and people, relating the production and transformation of human personhood through processes of objectification. That human and object biographies are produced in tandem further blurs the ontic line demarcating one from the other by creating a shared inalienable value. Therefore, the exchange

or modification of an object is also the exchange or modification of the self (Chapman 2000:5).

It is at this point that we must consider whether objects then *represent* or *are* the self. As previously discussed in Chapter Four, the concept of embodiment sees the body as the 'existential ground of culture and self' (Csordas 1994:6). But, as Fowler (2004:23) points out, not all societies conceptualise the body as the seat of the person or the self. Instead, the principles and meanings invested in the human body may also be invested in material culture and are performed through metaphors. Thus, in past cultures, the breaking of a sword into many pieces may be absolutely analogous to the dismemberment of human and/or animal bodies. In this manner, object technologies are inextricably linked with technologies of the body, affecting material, social and ritual transformations of the self (Dobres 1999:127). This opens up the possibility that objects did not simply act as metaphors symbolising the transition of persons through rites of passage, nor were objects solely a means of materialising relationships. Instead a concept of embodiment can extend so that it does not "rest upon a bounded and naturalized physicality, or indeed assume a unified and bounded sense of self, but can be expressed through materials that are distributed and circulated away from the body" (Crossland 2010).

Object fragmentation, akin to the bodily fragmentation discussed in the previous chapter, may be one such practice through which we might trace a distributed mode of personhood in the Viking Age. A concept of fragmentation has emerged in the archaeological discourse over the last two decades which has been used constructively to explore material assemblages exhibiting acts of purposeful breakage, curation and deposition (Chapman 2000, 2008; Brück 2004, 2006b, 2006a; Jones 2005; Chapman and Gaydarska 2006; Rebay-Salisbury et al.

2010). The chosen objects must be contextually significant but also possess an inalienable connection with particular agents and often have a social life of their own. Thus, the exchange and fragmentation of these objects is a means by which persons are maintained, transformed and enchained:

"The notion that fragments of objects transmit not only symbolism of their complete, once-intact form but also the enchained, or fractal, connotations of past makers and owners would account for a wide variety of fragmentation behaviour. The inalienability of valued objects (Weiner 1992) would then be extended to that of fragments of objects. There is, then, a direct analogy between the way that persons' relationships are extended through the inalienability of their valued objects and the fragmentation of material objects and the transmission of fragments to different individuals in different contexts."

(Chapman 2000:39)

However, the deposition of deliberately fragmented objects does not necessarily mean that all persons were conceptualised as possessing a fractal mode of personhood, or that all objects and people were engaged in enchained social relations, a critique voiced by Brittain and Harris (2010). They argue that many applications of fragmentation theory elide the concept with enchainment; enchained relations do not always stem from fragmentation, just as enchainment does not always beget Dividual modes of personhood (Brittain & Harris 2010:585).

This last concern was reiterated by Strathern (1988:288), who noted that while metaphors of fragmentation (or deconstitution) have run through her account of Melanesian personhood, the process does not result in 'an array of fragments' but in a singularity of internal unity: "the unity may be derived from the dividual through the halving of a pair, or may be the dissolution of a composite, multiple condition into a bounded, homogeneous state". While a Melanesian concept of partibility may not have incorporated any physical fragmentation practices, there

is an empirical basis for just such a connection in the Viking Age. For example, the *transformative logic* (Kristoffersen 2010) underpinning the cosmological order of Old Norse society was materialised in the animal art of the Iron Age (Hedeager 2004, 2005, 2011; Kristoffersen 1995). These motifs, depicting ambiguously hybridised beings, alluded to the transformative ability of persons to take many physical forms. In the later Iron Age (and particularly in the Viking Age) this concept was widely communicated through *visual* regimes of fragmentation and reconfiguration as materialised by the period's metalwork (Hedeager 2011) and, as suggested by some, can be found represented in the burial record (e.g. Holmquist-Olausson 1990).

Increasingly, evidence of physical fragmentation practices has been observed in Late Iron Age contexts, where human, animal and thing bodies have been divided up, distributed and reconfigured in other forms (Back Danielsson 2007; Hedeager 2011). For example, the use of fragmented human skeletal material has been discerned in the production of iron weaponry (Gansum 2004), ceramic vessels (Stilborg 2001), and in agricultural activities (Kaliff & Oestigaard 2004), and may go some way to explaining the widespread occurrence of reopened inhumations (Klevnäs 2016; Lund 2009:245–255, 2017) and the incomplete cremation deposits (Kaliff 1997) found across Scandinavia. Add to this the myriad ways that animal bodies (as discussed in the previous chapter) and thing bodies (discussed hereafter) have also been found in fragmented and reconfigured states, and the evidence supporting a connection between fragmentation and reconfiguration of personhood in the funerary arena becomes even more persuasive.

With these concepts (and caveats) in mind, a composite conceptual framework which incorporates elements of biography, embodiment and fragmentation

theory offers fruitful ground for the exploration of the constitution of personhood through burial ritual. In particular, viewing the funerary practice of ceremonial modification through this multifaceted lens may yield insights into the ontologies that structured Viking Age personhood. In the following sections of this chapter, I explore the possibility that objects, humans and animals sharing similar modes of bodily treatment and burial were regarded within a single construct of 'being' in Norse society. Specifically, by giving particular consideration to the types of treatment that ceremonially modified weapons exhibit and the manner in which they were deposited— in parallel with trends observed in human bodily treatment and deposition— we may more closely explore whether these entities, so divorced in our contemporary thinking, shared an ontological status which envisioned each as social 'persons'. At this point, it is necessary to examine the evidence of ceremonial modification in the burial data collected for this research.

Ceremonially Modified Weapons in Viking Age Burials

There are 98 weapons recorded in the database which appear to have been ceremonially modified (CM), and these come from a total of 69 graves (Table 45).²¹ Weapons that may have been ceremonially modified show evidence of bending, breaking and striking, although many modifications appear to have been exacted in various ways. In most cases, only one type of modifications is made on any one weapon, however there are a small number of weapons which appear to have been subjected to multiple forms of modification. The most commonly modified weapon is the sword, but spears and shield bosses also

²¹ A list of CM objects included in this study is presented in Appendix 8.

regularly exhibit evidence of this practice and, very occasionally, axes and arrowheads.

All study areas included in this research yielded burials that contained CM weapons and they were found in both single and multiple burials. The practice of ceremonial modification appears most commonly in Ireland, where 39 burials showed evidence of the custom— more than one third of all Irish Viking Age burials recorded. It is also a relatively common practice throughout England and Mann, where approximately 8% of each study area’s burials yield at least one modified weapon. While the practice of modification is relatively common across the British Isles, Scotland seems to be the exception with only six burials bearing CM weapons. Further to the north, Iceland’s recorded instances of the practice are also conspicuously low, with only one spearhead contributing to the corpus for the Western Diaspora.

Study Area	No. Burials	Rel. Freq. (%)
England	10	7.8
Mann	2	7.7
Scotland	6	4.4
Ireland	39	37.5
Iceland	1	0.3
Kaupang	10	6.3
Hedeby	1	0.1
Total	69	3.1

Table 45. Frequencies of burials containing CM weapons by total corpus for each study area.

Across the North Sea, evidence of the practice is mixed. The burials at Kaupang exhibit a good proportion of the CM weapons in this study, where a total of 13 weapons found within ten burials showed modification. Conversely, at Hedeby, ceremonial modification is even more rare than it is in Iceland; only a single burial out of a total of 1332 contained a possible CM weapon. The reason for the dearth of CM weapons in Iceland and Hedeby is unclear; whether this is caused

by misidentification, vague recording techniques and other methodological issues, or that the communities in these regions simply did not practice the custom, will only be ascertained upon further visual and metallurgical analysis. Unfortunately, that research is beyond the scope of this investigation.

The most common class of weapon to be ceremonially modified is the sword, forming over half of all CM weapons recorded in this sample (Table 46). Spearheads and shield bosses are less commonly modified but far more so than axes and arrowheads. Swords are not just dominant in the sample but are modified at a greater rate than all other classes of weapon (in relation to the total frequency of weapons recorded from Viking Age burials in the database). In general, 22% of all recovered swords have been ceremonially modified, compared with 15% of shields and just 12% of spears. There are almost double the number of spears than shield bosses in total in the database (215 spears compared with 122 bosses) yet shield bosses bear a slightly higher rate of modification than spearheads. Spears are more regularly recovered than shield bosses in all areas of this study so one would expect them to play a larger role in the ceremonial modification practice. One factor that may account for the similarity in rates of modification shared by spears and shields is that of representativeness. Spears are probably underrepresented in the data because they may have been broken much more frequently along their wooden shaft than is possible to identify archaeologically.

	Sword	Spear	Shield	Axe	Arrow
No. of CM Weapons	51	26	18	2	1
Total No. of Weapon	233	215	122	125	126
CM Rel. Freq. (%)	22	12	15	1.6	0.8

Table 46. Frequencies of CM exhibited by each class of weapon against total corpus of weapons.

Arrowheads, while occurring fairly regularly as a grave good in all areas of this study (except Mann), are almost never modified. Again, this may be because their modification was focused on the organic components of their form, much like spears, but it may also be that arrows did not hold the same status as the three major elements of a weapon set; the sword, shield and spear. Just one arrowhead seems to have been purposefully bent when it was discovered at Meols [G180] (England) in the nineteenth century, however the two other objects with which it was found (an axe and a spearhead) did not display any intentional modification, suggesting that the bent arrowhead may have come about by disturbance. Axes are also rarely physically modified however they are subject to other forms of ceremonial treatment, beyond what can be discussed here.²² Although the ceremonial modification of all objects is worthy of attention, the small sample of arrows and axes in this sample inhibits proper consideration, therefore my discussion will be restricted to swords, spears and shields from here after.

Modification Practices

The types of ceremonial modification observed on weaponry in this sample include intentional bending; fragmentation into parts through cutting, breaking and other means; striking with other instruments to cause indentations; and purposeful erosion of edges and joints by various means. These have been grouped into the three major types of breaking, bending and striking to ease

²² Axes (along with other classes of weapon) are found in 'standing' or 'embedded' positions, suggesting that they have been thrust (blade first) into the ground surface of the grave before being backfilled. This has been identified in four graves at Kaupang (Blindheim & Heyerdahl-Larsen 1995:26–28, 32–34, 45; discussed briefly by Stylegar 2007:89) and at Cumwhitton in England (see Paterson et al. 2014:97). Similar practices relating to other classes of weapon are identified at other sites, such as Birka (Gräslund 1980:30–31, 76), Kvarnbacken, Åland (Kivikoski 1963:68), Bogøvej, Langeland (Grøn et al. 1994:15) and Husby-Långhundra, Sweden (Sundqvist 1993:156). For an interpretation of this practice, see Nordberg (2002).

discussion. Weapons show more than one form of modification were noted under the designation 'multiple modification'. There are also numerous cases where breakage has occurred years later as a result of bending or striking; these instances have been counted as bending and striking respectively. The frequency of the different types of modification that are exhibited on each type of weapon is outlined below Table 47.

Weapon Type	Broken	Bent	Struck	Multi-Mod.	Total
Swords	27	20	0	4	51
Spears	11	13	0	2	26
Shields	1	0	16	1	18
Axes	1	0	1	0	2
Arrows	0	1	0	0	1
Total	40	34	17	7	98

Table 47. Frequency of modification type of CM weapons.

Of all weapons that that are ceremonially modified, almost three quarters of these show breakage or bending. While the form and materiality of each object will certainly dictate the types of modification that can be exacted, there seems to be a slight preference for their fragmentation, involving breaking or cutting, rather than bending. Striking is much less common again and is almost exclusively observed in shield bosses. With evidence of bending and breaking occurring in relatively similar numbers, should they be considered as two ways of bringing about the same end, or is the choice to bend or break informed by other factors and intentions?

Breaking versus Bending: Two sides of the same coin?

Breaking and bending have not been explored as two complementary approaches in achieving the same end— the ceremonial modification of weapons— but the reason for this separation have not been explicitly explored. Aannestad has suggested that broken and bent weapons are not necessarily the end result of two different practices, but rather could be due to differences in the quality of

steel used to produce weapons that affect how they respond to bending— this is based on the premise that weak blades are easier to break during the bending process, a consequence of the iron’s material properties (2018:151). However, while there are probably a great many weapons that have broken in the process of bending, there are a considerable number of weapons that do not exhibit any evidence of bending prior to the break, suggesting that the act was undertaken to purposefully produce a broken object, not a bent one.

That is not to say that an object’s materiality does not help create the circumstances in which it is modified. Certainly, the modification an object experiences occurs within the constraints and opportunities afforded by its substance, thereby exerting its own agency in the ceremonial process. However, as Ingold (2007) reminds us, materiality is not just an effect of *what*, but also of *when*. The agential consequences of an objects’ materialities were present as soon as, or perhaps even before, it was created, the product of innumerable converging ‘trails of growth and transformation’ in the life of an object at any one time (Ingold 2007:9). In our case, a weapon’s agency is present not solely at the end of its social life, but when it left the forge. Its materiality governed how it performed over the course of its life and these interactions developed into a shared life history with its owner, ultimately helping to produce how it was perceived ontologically. Indeed, perhaps elements of its material agency existed prior to its smelting, as suggested by Gansum (2004) in his consideration of the use of human skeletal material as bone-coal in carbonizing bloomery iron.²³ In this way, materials and objects are active participants in the relational webs in

²³ Gansum suggests that the bones of an ancestor or other notable person may have been curated for use as bone coal which, when sufficiently heated, sees carbon penetrate the internal structure of the iron during production. In this manner, the ancestor transfers into and transforms the weapon, combining the “power from the dead with weapons in a symbolic and straightforward way” (Gansum 2004:43).

which they are entangled with humans and other non-human entities (Hodder 2011, 2014; Jones & Boivin 2010; Latour 2005:70). They create meaning and identity for themselves and those with whom they relate, and it is this, not just via physical properties alone, that governs how they are treated before deposition. Consequently, I argue that breakage and bending should be viewed as distinct treatments, despite being performed within a similar metaphysical framework, which are exacted in accordance with the ontological status of each weapon.

Breaking

Intentional breakage is exacted on both a greater number of weapons and a greater range of weapon types than intentional bending. It is also the most universal type of ceremonial modification observed, with examples of broken weapons being found in six of the seven different study areas in this research.

Swords

Of the 27 swords that were intentionally broken, the majority of them only demonstrated one (n=7) or two breaks (n=12). The precise locations of the breakages are not well documented, especially for the antiquarian recoveries, however, of the seven swords that were broken in only one place, all of the breaks were made along the length of the blade. Swords showing two breakage points are more common but only eight have the locations of their breaks recorded. The majority in these cases also only occur along the blade; three swords had their blades broken into rough thirds while a further two had their breaks located lower down at the mid-blade and the point. Only two swords were severed directly below the cross-guard (separating the hilt from the blade) with another occurring lower down the blade. Only one sword in this category has a break in the hilt section, which occurs along the grip.

The hilt of the sword becomes much more of a focus for modification when it exhibits three or more breaks, although this is relatively rare; only three swords present this treatment. Importantly though, each of these swords were part of a set of weapons that had all been ceremonially modified, and the complexity and care demonstrated in the wider contexts of these burials make them quite distinctive. Firstly, the sword from the burial at Woodstown [G2007] in Ireland was broken in three places; the pommel had been separated from the rest of the hilt, the rest of the hilt was severed from the upper blade and the lower portion of the blade (including the point) had also been broken away. The burial was formed by a plain earth cut covered by a low cairn (O'Brien & Russell 2004:121). Little was notable about the grave structure (except perhaps the use of a cairn) but it concealed one of the richest furnished burials ever found in Ireland and the only grave for which there is solid evidence of a full weapon set (Harrison & Ó Floinn 2014).

A full weapon set usually comprised of a sword, spear and axe, in addition to a shield for defence, but there was no established standard and individuals probably carried a variety of weapons suited to different forms of combat and their own preferences (Williams 2019:8). Weapon sets also varied on a regional basis; for example, axes are commonly observed in weapon sets recovered from Norwegian burials, but this type of weapon features very rarely in Irish contexts (Harrison & Ó Floinn 2014). Notably, weapon sets usually occur in burials which exhibit a greater array of personal items and tools suggesting that individuals buried with sets were the highest tier of the social hierarchy (Solberg 1985:74). On this basis, the Woodstown individual was probably of distinctly high status.

This may also be the case for the other two other burials in which swords have been broken into four parts; the multiple burial at Ballateare [G2012] on the Isle of Man and the Machrins burial [G2317] on Colonsay, Scotland. The details of the Ballateare sword's breakage are confusing and at times contradictory (cf. Bersu and Wilson 1966:51–52; Wilson 2008:31), but the sword is thought to have borne at least three breaks; two breaks at the upper and lower blade as well as the lower end of the grip, just above the cross guard. As already established (Chapter Four), the Ballateare burial is one of the most unique Viking Age finds from the Western Diaspora for the labour invested in the burial structure, the many grave goods that were included (particularly a complete weapon set) and the sacrifice of a young woman (Wilson 2008:35).



Figure 29. Sword from Machrins, Colonsay, Inner Hebrides. SCRAN 000-000-099-757-C © National Museums Scotland (2019)

Likewise, the Machrins burial found in 1891 was also a rich burial, consisting of a boat containing the remains of a man and a horse, covered by a low mound. Again, the sword was just one element of a complete weapon set and was broken into many pieces; the grip was broken in half, and then the rest of the sword was found in many fragments "all about the same size and fitting accurately together" (McNeill 1891:62) (Figure 29). All three burials contained weapon sets that were modified in such a manner that a great amount of effort and time must have been dedicated to the process, which may confirm Aannestad's claim that the practice has close ties with elites (2018:160).

Spears

It is especially difficult to establish the intentional breakage of spears for a number of reasons. Firstly, the structural integrity of the spear's neck is weak, meaning that post-depositional breakage is as likely as intentional breakage (Harrison & Ó Floinn 2014). Unfortunately, the neck and socket are the location of most breakages in this class of weapon which ultimately disguises the actual prevalence of intentional rather than non-intentional breakage. Secondly, spears are constituted in major part by organic material and the lack of preserved wood in archaeological contexts means it is impossible to identify whether spear shafts were also subject to this type of treatment. Although this most probably was the case, the practice is probably vastly underrepresented archaeologically. In some instances, it is possible to infer that a shaft had been broken if the spearhead was found in a grave that was shorter than the potential length of the weapon, but this is almost impossible to verify. This has been suggested for the spear from the Ballateare burial [G2012] which most probably had its shaft broken to fit in the deceased's coffin, but also for burials from Inchicore [G1933], Woodstown [G2007] and Knoxpark [G1990] in Ireland, of which the first two had their necks broken and the latter, its socket.

In light of these diagnostic difficulties, it is perhaps unsurprising that only three spears in the entire corpus are considered likely to have been intentionally broken: the spearheads from the Bride Street [G1907] and Woodstown burials in Ireland were broken at the neck, while the spearhead from the Swordle Bay boat burial [G2355] in Scotland is also thought to have been broken. Although its recent publication lacks any detail regarding the location of the break, the authors are confident that the break was deliberately caused (Harris *et al.* 2017). This is certainly supported by the fact that the spear was part of a weapon set in which all other items were ceremonially modified. The spear and the shield

(which had been struck and distorted) were deposited in the stone layers above the boat burial, which has been interpreted as a final ritual act in closure of the monument (Harris *et al.* 2017:198).

Apart from the three likely cases, there are a further eight spearheads that bear evidence of breakage that appears to be intentional (see Appendix 8), however most of these derive from antiquarian finds so it is difficult to say with any surety. Of these, all but one exhibit only one break, with most located around the socket, particularly the neck. The one spearhead that bears evidence of two breaks is that found in burial G1978 from Kilmainham, which was reportedly broken in two places: one break just below the neck and the other just above the mouth of the socket. But, the weapons from the Kilmainham-Islandbridge complex lack direct provenance and contextual information, so this record should be considered with caution. Accordingly, it is impossible to come to any conclusions based on the evidence at hand beyond stating that very few, if any, spearheads were broken in two places. It is probably far more likely that spears were broken along their wooden shafts in combination with a break to the iron spearhead itself, however we will likely never know how frequently this happened.

Bending

Many of the trends identified for the weapons that have been ceremonially broken are echoed for those that have been bent. Again, ceremonially bent swords are the most numerous class of weapon exhibiting this treatment, but its dominance in this category is lesser than that of the broken swords; bent spears are only slightly less common.

Swords

There are twenty swords that appear to have been intentionally bent and three quarters of these have been bent in a single location along the blade. There seems to be no preference indicated where the bend should occur on the blade, as bends have been identified on the upper third of the blade (n=3), the middle (n=3), the lower blade and point (n=3). Six other swords lack specific detail of the exact location of bends, but all were recorded to occur along the blade. It is uncertain whether this distinct focus on the blade was purely out of ease (offering a path of least resistance) or out of the belief that the blade was conceptually or cosmologically the source of its potency. However, that is not to say that hilts were never intentionally bent. Grave 3 at Cumwhitton [G138] in Cumbria, England, is just one potential case (Figure 30). Here, a double-edged iron sword was found with a 45° bend exhibited at the upper end of the grip, but whether the modification was affected before or after deposition is difficult to conclude (Paterson *et al.* 2014:83).



Figure 30. X-ray of the hilt of sword from Cumwhitton 3, Cumbria (after Paterson *et al.* 2014:84 pl.46).

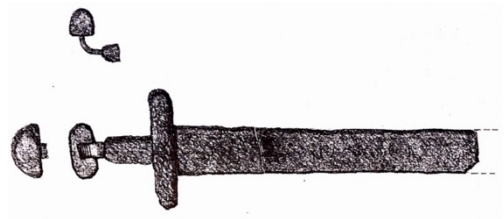


Figure 31. The Workington (West Seaton) sword showing two bends; one at grip and the other at mid blade (after Edwards 2004:124 fig.1).

Another sword with an intentionally bent grip is the Workington sword [G230], also from Cumbria (Figure 31). The blade was bent at least once approximately 18cm from the cross guard and the mid-section of the grip was bent at a 90°

angle to the rest of the hilt (Edwards 2004:126).²⁴ Unfortunately, it was found in 1902 as a single casual find so little more can be made of the find contextually. The Workington and Cumwhitton swords are the only two cases that exhibit bends at the hilt, however the practice is probably less rare than the evidence here suggests. The Workington sword is also unique in that it is one of three swords that displays evidence of bending in at least two different locations, and the only sword to have had this carried out at its hilt. As mentioned, swords exhibiting bends at two different places are considerably rarer than those singly bent; apart from the Workington sword, two further swords bear evidence of dual bends; the sword from Ka.277 [G2060] at Kaupang was found bent at the upper and lower thirds of the blade (Figure 33), as was the sword from the famous Hesketh-in-the-Forest [G164] cremation burial from Cumbria (Figure 32).

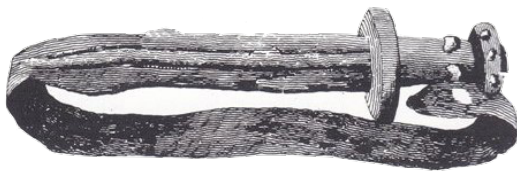


Figure 32. Sword from Hesketh-in-the-Forest cremation [G164]. (Hodgson 1832 pl.II).

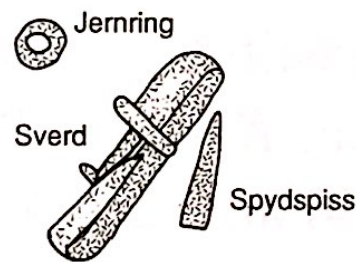


Figure 33. Sword from Ka.277 [G2060]. Excerpt after Blindheim & Heyerdahl-Larsen (1995:123 fig.15).

The Hesketh burial is the most well-known and frequently cited burial containing CM weapons that has yet been found in the Western Diaspora, perhaps because

²⁴ The sword blade may have been bent more than once. The sword was lost to the public after its showing at the 1903 meeting of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society until almost a century later when it was found in a private home in 2002. The remains were analysed at the Durham conservation laboratory at which time the conservator believed three of the corroded iron portions of the blade did not belong to the sword. Edwards (2004:126) is not of this view and states that they seem more likely to be closely bent-up sections of the same blade.

it resembles the Norwegian examples so closely. A layer of cremated bone with charcoal and ash was found, along with several grave goods lying in a heap, within a cairn near Hesketh-in-the-Forest in 1822 (Hodgson 1832:107; Cowen 1967:31). Shetelig reviewed the burial and argued that the grave structure and the localized pile of grave goods— combined with their obvious intentional damage— was a “perfect example of the Norwegian cremation burial... in complete accordance with the prevailing Norwegian custom” (1954:25–26). Upon examination, it was found that the sword and spears were bent— the sword had been deliberately bent back on itself at two locations, presumably by a combined process of heating and hammering— and a shield boss was recovered as well, having been struck with a sharp implement, breaking it in two.

Spears

As mentioned briefly above, spearheads also demonstrate bending in roughly the same frequency as they are broken. Thirteen spearheads from this sample have been found to have been ceremonially bent, and remarkably, all of them bear evidence of only one bend. Like swords, blades of spearheads are the clear focus for ceremonial bending. The most common point of bending is the mid-blade section (Figure 35), however there are a similar number of spears that show bending in the upper blade, mostly localised to the point (Figure 34). Spearhead necks and sockets seem to be bent much less frequently, but they still occur.

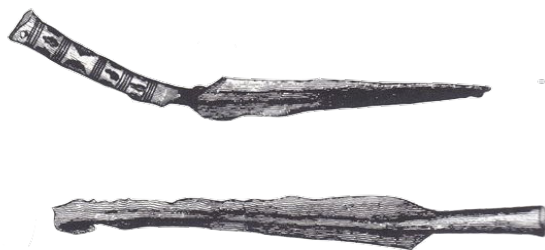


Figure 34. Spearheads from Hesketh-in-the-Forest [G164]; one bent at neck, the other bent at point. After Hodgson (Hodgson 1832 pl.II).

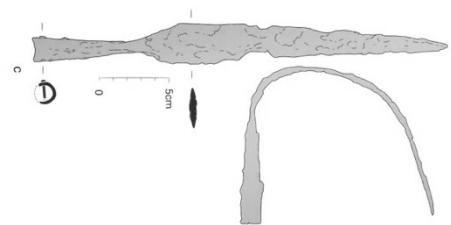


Figure 35. Bent spearhead (D375) from Kilmainham 1845 [G1958], Dublin. After Harrison & Ó Floinn (2014:109 ill.51.c).

The sample discussed here is made up of spears recovered predominantly in Ireland (n=10), all but one originating from the Kilmainham-Islandbridge burial complex. Two of the remaining three come from the Hesket burial discussed above, and the third is the only CM object to have been recovered in Iceland, at Eldvatn. The Eldvatn spearhead was discovered in a heavily disturbed inhumation grave that had eroded from amongst the sand during flooding of the Eldvatn River in 2016 (Stefánsdóttir & Hermannsdóttir 2018:90). The spearhead's blade is reportedly bent at a 90° angle to its body (Gísladóttir 2018). Iceland is home to over 300 graves, however this is, to the author's knowledge, the only CM weapon to ever be recorded there (Gísladóttir 2018; Pétursdóttir 2018).

Striking

One particular type of modification which appears to occur specifically to shield bosses is the deliberate indentation or striking of their cones. Fifteen of the eighteen CM shield bosses show evidence of striking with a sharp implement like an axe or a sword, however it is likely that the two shield bosses which were found broken were probably struck in the first instance, with the break occurring as a secondary result of taphonomic processes. There seems to be considerable variation of the breakage exacted across the sample. Most bosses only exhibit one or two strikes (n=11) mostly localised to the crown. The four bosses which have been struck twice all exhibit two parallel linear indentations across the top of the dome. More rarely are bosses struck more than twice, with only four bosses indicating as much from Ireland, at Islandbridge [G1946], Kilmainham [G1986] and Woodstown [G2007], and in Gr.11 at Westness [G2367] in Scotland (Figure 36 and Figure 37). The boss from the Islandbridge burial is unique in that the nature of the four indentations suggest that all of them were created with an edged blade, three of which probably reflect the use of a sword

while one was notably curved, perhaps made by an axe (Harrison & Ó Floinn 2014:488).

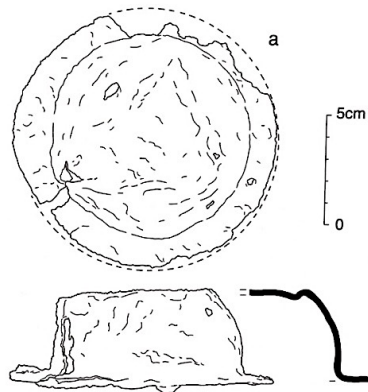


Figure 36. Struck boss from Islandbridge 1869 [G1946]. After Harrison & Ó Floinn (Harrison & Ó Floinn 2014:118 ill.56.a).



Figure 37. Westness Boss from G2367 at the National Museum of Scotland. (Viking Age Compendium 2019).

The boss from the Woodstown burial [G2007] was initially thought to have only been struck twice in parallel positioning and then once again at a right angle to the first two lower down on the wall, however during conservation another three smaller indentations were identified (Harrison & Ó Floinn 2014:666). Perhaps this particular shield was of special significance, leading to its repeated striking by numerous members of the funeral audience. Alternately, the act may have been performed by a single individual in what would have been a dynamic, potentially frenzied, funerary display. The special status of this particular boss is also supported by the shield's distinctive visual character— Harrison and Ó Floinn note that it was highly unusual in that the wooden shield board would have been curved on a single plane (2014:666). Again, the greater number of cuts, bends and strikes observed on some weapons suggests that this was linked to wealthy individuals with specifically distinctive and costly items. Presumably, a greater number of on lookers would attend the funeral of a well-known and central member of the community, and the greater number of injuries (and evidence of different weapons used on the same item) suggest that more people had a stake in modifying the weapons.

Collective Modification: Power in Numbers?

Multiple Modifications

A small number of weapons (n=7) exhibit two different types of modification and the practice is only identified in swords (n=4), spears (n=2) and a shield boss (see Appendix 8). All of the swords— from Swordle Bay [G2355], Islandbridge [G1946], Bride Street [G1907], and Ka.403 from Nordre Kaupang [G2141]— show a combination of both bending and breaking. The sword from Kaupang is missing its hilt and is bent along the blade, while the other three show the reverse; a bend at the upper blade or hilt and a break at the lower blade.

Forming conclusions on the basis of just three swords is not ideal, however one possible interpretation may be ventured. Does the bend of the upper blade materialize a process of transformation through death, while the breaking of the swords' blade point symbolizes the nullification of its potency as a weapon? If so, then how does the Kaupang sword fit in to this schema? The Kaupang sword is unusual and very difficult to interpret for the few contextual details that exist—no skeletal remains were found and no grave cut was identified, the only 'grave good' recovered was the sword itself that was deposited under a large stone. So, it is highly possible that this sword was not deposited with a burial in the usual sense, but instead represents a votive deposit, or perhaps functioned as a cenotaph.

With only two spearheads displaying multiple modification, very little can be said of the practice, if indeed all modifications were intentional. The College Green spearhead [G1915] from Dublin had been broken at the neck and bent at a 40° angle near its blade point. As ever, it is hard to know if the neck break was purposeful, however there is clear evidence that all of the modifications were

deliberately executed on the spear from the Machrins burial [G2317]. It, too, was broken at the neck, but it also demonstrated two further modifications; its wooden shaft was severed with a sharp implement and its socket was purposefully mutilated by what must have been a series of strikes and cuts, in a manner more readily observed on a shield boss. The considerable investment of time and effort spent in the modification of the Machrins sword has already been discussed, but the treatment of the spearhead adds further weight to that observation. The single shield boss displaying multiple modification comes from the Hesket burial [G164], which was broken in two and damaged by fire. It is also said to have incurred a dent from a strike, however the excavators are uncertain whether these modifications were intentional.

Sets, Pairs and Singles

Of the 69 graves that contain at least one CM weapon in this research, just 41 burials had reliable provenance records linking weapons to specific graves. Almost all of the Kilmainham and Islandbridge weapons were excluded because their association with specific graves and other grave goods has been lost. From the 41 burials, only six of them contained weapon sets in which all items had been modified (Table 48). Of particular interest is the Bride Street burial [G1907] which not only contained a full set of ceremonially modified weapons, but also included a Bronze Age halberd (spearhead) which was also ceremonially modified before being deposited in the Viking Age individual's burial. How this Bronze Age halberd came into the property of the deceased (or the community who buried him) is unclear, but the fact that it had been curated and modified as part of the burial assemblage demonstrates an aspect of temporal continuity not often observed outside of traditional antecedent multiple burials.

Burial	Weapons	Modification	Rite
Hesket-in-the-Forest [G164]	Sword, two spears and shield	Bent	Cremation
Ballateare [G2012]	Sword, spear and shield	Broken	Inhumation
Bride Street [G1907]	Sword, spear and shield (as well as a BA spearhead)	Broken	Inhumation
Woodstown [G2007]	Sword, spear and shield	Broken	Inhumation
Swordle Bay [G2355]	Sword, spear and shield	Broken*	Inhumation
Machrins [G2317]	Sword, spear and axe	Broken	Inhumation

Table 48. CM weapon sets. Modification type relates only to swords and spears. *Swordle Bay sword cannot be confirmed as intentional.

It may be significant that all of the CM weapon sets originate from burials in the British Isles. Aannestad (2018:159) has not specifically addressed the occurrence of ceremonial modification of all weapons within a set found in specific Norwegian Viking Age burials so it is difficult to gauge how significant this trend is in relation to the broader custom. However, we can compare the proportion of ceremonially modified weapon sets in this dataset with the total proportion of weapon sets from Late Iron Age Norwegian burials. Obviously, it would be ideal to compare the ceremonial modification data presented here with the relative proportion of all weapon burials from the same geographical and temporal context, however this was not available at the time of writing. Even so, Solberg's (1985) landmark study of the Merovingian and Viking Age weapon burials of eastern, western and central Norway serves as a fair comparison. In her 1985 study, Solberg calculated the number of burials which contained a single, pair or set of weapons as a proportion of the total corpus of 3796 male burials. The relative proportion of each type of weapon burial from Solberg's study compared with the data presented in this research is outlined in Table 49.

If Solberg's figures are taken as a general indication of the frequency with which single weapons, pairs of weapons and weapon sets were deposited in Late Iron Age burials across the Western Viking World, then it appears that ceremonial

modification loosely follows the same trend with only slight variations observed in Groups 1 and 3. The ceremonial modification of two weapons within a burial is only slightly lower than the average frequency of burials containing two weapons (Solberg's Group 2).

Combination	Current Dataset		Solberg (1985)			
	Total Corpus		Total Corpus		Prof. Excavated	
	No. of Burials	Rel. Freq. (%)	No. of Burials	Rel. Freq. (%)	No. of Burials	Rel. Freq. (%)
Single – Group 1	29	71	≈ 2628	70	19	41
Pair – Group 2	6	15	≈ 736	20	18	38
Set – Group 3	6	15	≈ 433	12	10	21

Table 49. Frequency of CM weapon depositions compared with the relative proportion of weapon combinations calculated by Solberg (1985). The majority of burials (n=20) from the Kilmainham–Islandbridge complex in the current dataset have been excluded due to weak provenancing. The frequencies of burials for Solberg's total corpus (total n= 3796) has been calculated from the percentages given in the text, figures are approximate due to differences in rounding. The absolute and relative frequencies of the professionally excavated sample (total n=47) are those given in Solberg's paper.

However, when compared to Solberg's professionally excavated sample, the difference between all groups becomes more pronounced. The reasons underlying this disparity could be manifold, perhaps relating to local customs, legal standards and the organisation of regional social structures. What is notable though, is that while the differences between each dataset's weapon groups are stark, the difference between single and dual weapon burials in Solberg's professionally excavated sample is remarkably similar (41% and 38% respectively). In turn, this may indicate that ceremonial modification was a practice centred, more often than not, on a single item in the burial assemblage (71%) and not performed on all extant weapons in a burial, no matter how many were present.

The fact that ceremonial modification overwhelmingly focused on a single weapon within a grave good assemblage may be taken in evidence that the modification ritual was not fixated on weaponry as a class of object requiring ceremonial treatment. Rather, ceremonial modification was concentrated on specific objects which necessitated ritual processing precisely because they were conceptualised differently from the rest of the objects interred with the deceased. To further explore how this conceptual difference was articulated, we need to examine the manner in which they were buried.

Modes of Burial

The above survey of the modified weapons found in human burials across all study areas of this research clearly demonstrates that the manner of their modification was somewhat standardised. Weapons were bent, broken and struck, with little co-occurrence of these practices appearing on the same object, and seemingly little variation visible in the manner of each treatments' execution.²⁵ However, the practice became incredibly varied when it came to the moment of burial. The manner in which the ceremonially modified weapons were buried with the deceased was carried out in immense diversity, layering each act of modification with meanings specific to the weapon and its relationship with the whole burial assemblage.

Weapons were deposited in various states of totality, sometimes represented by the entire body of the weapon, at other times missing a single part, and more rarely, present only as a single part. Very rarely were weapons given their own

²⁵ I refer to visible modification here; it may well be that there were many different types of modification that each weapon experienced identifiable only through fine-scale metallurgical analysis, i.e. variations in heat treatments at different temperatures etc.

separate 'grave context', but their placement was structured in other ways which appear more burial-like than depositional, appearing to personalise them in ways reminiscent of the human dead they accompanied. Structural elements akin to formal burial structures were used to inter some of the weapons, while the placement of weapons in close corporeal connection with their human and animal companions formed burial tableaux seemingly made in the image of traditional multiple burials. Again, a full exploration of these burial motifs is beyond what can be achieved in this thesis; however, a few key examples serve as a solid starting point from which a discussion of the potential form of object personhood can take shape.

Modification and Rite Type

One of the enduring concepts regarding ceremonial modification is the exclusive relationship it holds with the cremation burial rite (Shetelig & Falk 1937:185). The link between the two practices has been repeatedly restated after each new discovery of ceremonially modified objects, without much critical consideration of its validity. One exemption is the analysis of Harrison and Ó Floinn (2014:274–277) who highlighted that no Viking Age cremations have been found in Ireland, despite a substantial number of ceremonially modified weapons appearing in Viking Age burials. Resultingly, the Irish data is in complete opposition to Shetelig's (Shetelig 1912) observations for western Norway. Aannestad (2018:154) has recently shown that the link between modification and cremation is not exclusive, although ceremonial modification in cremation burials is still far more common. Of the total 169 graves for which rite type was known, Aannestad found that 155 of these containing CM weapons were cremations, while just 14 were inhumations (Aannestad 2018:154).

The CM weapons in this study are clearly more prevalent in inhumations than cremations. However, when we compare the relative proportion of cremations versus inhumations for all burials with the same figure for burials containing CM weapons, a slight increase in cremations is observed (Table 50). This means that, where cremation is used for human burials, the chance that CM weapons will be found increases marginally. Evidently, there is still some connection between the modification practice and cremation, even in the Western Diaspora where inhumation dominates mortuary rites

	Western Diaspora		Scandinavian Sample	
	CM Burials (%)	Total Burials (%)	CM Burials (%)	Total Burials (%)
Inhumations	89	96	73	89
Cremations	11	4	27	11

Table 50. Proportion of burials containing CM weapons by rite type for each region.

Of particular interest are the divergent trajectories of the practice in regions where the burial record is made up entirely of inhumations. No cremation burials have ever been discovered in Iceland and Ireland, and while this may be the reason why only a single CM spearhead has been found in Iceland, this cannot be true for Ireland, which has yielded the largest collection of CM weapons across the entire Western Diaspora. Aannestad rightly argues that differences observed in the frequencies of CM swords across south-eastern Norway must be a result of local, regional, and cultural variations in burial practices (2018:158). The discrepancy between frequencies and rite type that are identifiable between all regions of this study should be viewed in this light also.

From the burials for which burial rite is confirmed, there seems to be no distinct difference between the type of modification a weapon received and the burial rite used for the deceased (Table 51).

Rite	Broken	Bent	Struck
Cremation	22	18.5	14
Inhumation	78	81.5	86

Table 51. Relative proportion of modification types in relation to burial rite. Total of ceremonially modified weapons in cremations n=11 and inhumations n=46 (where burial rite is known). Each type of modification for weapons with multiple modifications has been counted once each.

The figures indicate that broken and bent weapons are found in roughly equal frequencies in both cremations and inhumations. The striking of shield bosses does seem to have a strong correlation with inhumation, however with only 14 bosses constituting the sample, it is impossible to say with any surety. These results are taken to demonstrate that bending and breaking are two expressions of the same cosmological scheme. The increased relative frequency of CM weapons in cremation graves suggests that Viking Age migrants may have been conscious of the practices' Scandinavian roots when performing the ritual in the Western Diaspora, but that the diversity in its interpretation and execution at home (as demonstrated by Aannestad (2018:158)) shows that Scandinavian settlers felt free to adapt the practice to prevailing local and regional customs.

Burial Arrangement

Of all of the ceremonially modified weapons represented in this study's database, it was possible to infer how the weapon was deposited structurally in relation to the deceased in 54 cases. This may seem self-evident; we would expect to see the objects placed in the same context as the deceased, wouldn't we? However, the deposition of CM weapons was a highly structured practice. In most cases, the weapons were reconfigured in the same context in close connection with the human dead, but some weapons were interred externally to the human deceased's grave context. Further, some weapons were provided with their own burial structures, echoing the structural elements used in human burials, like containers and stone settings. The instances of this treatment are few, but they

do indicate that some weapons were afforded individual ritual processing in a manner followed for humans and animals in burial (Table 52).

Spatial Relation	Weapon-Human Burial Rel. Freq. (%)	Animal-Human Burial Rel. Freq. (%)	Human-Human Burial Rel. Freq. (%)
Same Context	89	66	61
Different Contexts	11	32	34
Different Structures	0	3	5

Table 52. Relative frequencies of context use for deposition of weapons in relation to humans, compared to the same spatial format used in animal-human burials and all-human MBs. Context unknown for n=43 weapons.

Only 11% of the CM weapons (n=6) were interred using a separate context or physical structure resembling those used for the interment of animals and humans. In three cases, CM weapons were placed independently from the deceased's grave context; at Ballateare [G2012], a shield boss which had been struck twice had been placed immediately outside of the male's coffin, while the CM spear and shield from the Swordle Bay burial [G2355] were placed above the inhumation amongst the stones that formed the lower layers of the cairn. These items were kept separate from the human body, but they were not deposited with any structural features specific to their own context, like the broken and bent sword from burial Ka.403 [G2141]. This weapon had been placed in the same context as the deceased (although all such remains had disappeared prior to excavation) but was covered by a flat stone slab in a manner reminiscent of the wider practice commonly identified at Kaupang in which burials were demarcated by stone covers and settings. Lastly, a further two weapons— a sword and a shield— at Woodstown [G2007] had been placed in their own bags (or possibly wrapped in cloth) after each modification had been performed, subsequently being placed as discrete deposits around the grave cut.

If distinct context-use denotes a similarity in ontological status, as argued in the previous chapter in the case of animals and humans, then the majority of CM weapons do not seem to be included in this mindset. But, while weapons provided with their own specific context were certainly in the minority, the few examples that were treated this way suggest that objects, in this case weapons, could cross the boundary between object and subject in some cases.

The next section of this chapter considers the various modes of fragmentation that were exacted across the corpus of ceremonially modified weapons presented in this study. It is important to note here that, in line with Brittain and Harris' (2010) observation that wholes and parts are arbitrary distinctions superficially applied within a framework of fragmentation, my organisation of this section of the chapter using these terms is not meant to imply *a priori* that whole weapons are conceptually different to partial weapons. Rather, the categorisation is purely a means of addressing the various ways through which modification was performed using terms with which we are already familiar.

Thing Bodies: Wholes and Parts

Much like human and animal bodies, weapons were also deposited in a whole or partial state; sometimes just a single part was interred while at other times, a whole weapon was deposited while missing a part of its usual form. This may seem intuitive, especially as we have already established that breaking was the most common act of modification performed on the weapons in this sample. However, we might expect to see many more weapons deposited in a partial state than we actually do; just 15 weapons appeared to have been deposited partially, compared to the overwhelming majority who were deposited whole (n=80 or 84%). This indicates that while fragmentation was an integral part of the ritual involved in ceremonial modification, the practice was not carried out as a means

of facilitating distribution. It may also support the position that the bending of weapons was part of the same ritual programme which aimed to alter rather than divide.

Depositional State	Weapons	Animals	Humans
	Rel. Freq. (%)	Rel. Freq. (%)	Rel. Freq. (%)
Whole	84	89	98
Part	16	11	2

Table 53. Comparison of the relative frequency of deposition in whole or partial state between weapons, animals and humans.

The relative proportion of whole and partial weapon deposition compared to the same depositional trait observed for the human and animal data is shown in Table 53. In comparison, the depositional state of CM weapons is quite similar to that demonstrated by the animal data, which may indicate that their ontological status was similarly conceived in relation to funerary ritual. However, if we examine the differential treatment of the types of weapons that were ceremonially modified, it appears that spears and shields were deposited wholly (even when fragmented) much more frequently than were swords (Table 54).

Weapon Type	Whole (%)	Part (%)
Swords	74.5	25.5
Spears	92	8
Shields	100	0

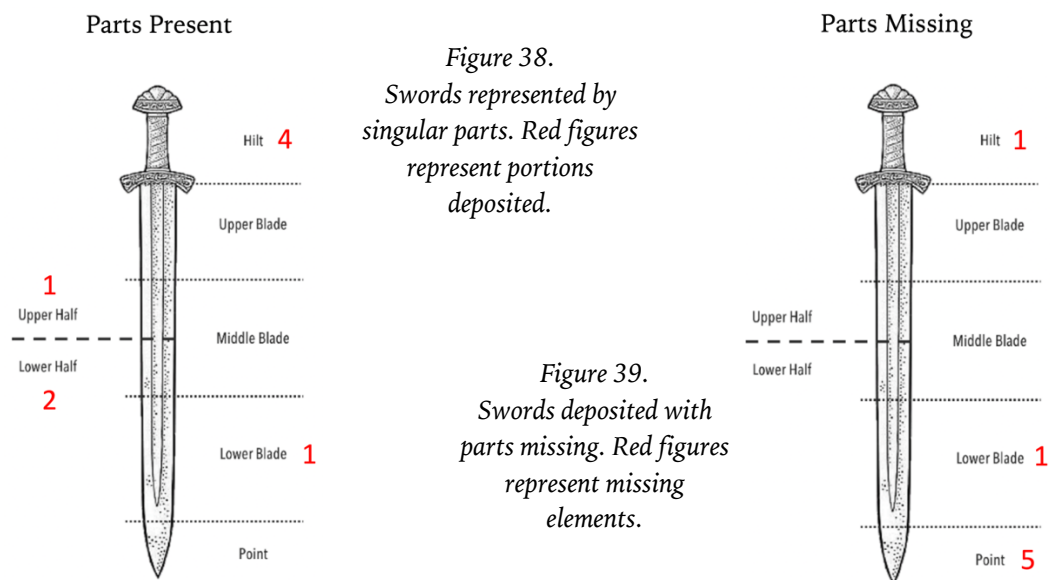
Table 54. Relative frequency of the state of deposition for each weapon type.

Although the material agencies of each weapon type would affect what form of modification was performed, it is difficult to see how the structural and material aspects of shields and spears would differ so greatly to that of swords to account for the disparity in deposition. It is true that spears and shields comprise a greater organic component than swords, meaning that any modification focused on this part of each weapon would be almost impossible to identify

archaeologically. However, shields and spears were still modified in considerable numbers, meaning that it cannot be down to preservation alone in creating an archaeological record where spears and shields are rarely deposited in a partial state. This signifies that while all weapons embodied the potential for partibility, swords held a special status within this ontology, in which their partibility could be more fluidly arranged to articulate a greater range of relationships and identities.

Only two spearheads have portions missing; the spearhead from Inchicore [G1933] had been broken at the neck and was found missing its socket, while the spearhead from Eyrephort [G1923] was missing its neck after being broken. The neck is the weakest point of a spearhead, meaning both cases could easily be explained by post-depositional disturbance, although the fact that only two of a total 26 spears were found to have parts missing may suggest special circumstances.

A total of 13 swords were interred either represented by one or two parts, or with elements missing (Figure 38 and Figure 39). When singular parts are deposited in burials, these are commonly elements of the hilt. Obviously, this could be influenced by differential preservation, particularly as these components are typically more robust than other sections of the sword, (i.e. the blade). Moreover, three of the four hilt parts recovered were found amongst the cremation deposits at Heath Wood, so it could be that these portions were less fragmented by fire, allowing them to be more easily retrieved from the pyre for deposition.



Little clarification is offered by an examination of the parts missing from otherwise wholly deposited swords. To support the curation of hilts, we might expect to see a greater number of hilts missing in these cases, however only one case of this is documented in Ka.403 [G2141] at Kaupang. Instead, it appears that blade points are the portion most commonly retained as, in five different cases, they were not recovered during excavation, even when the sword was scabbarded and otherwise whole. This was the case for the sheathed swords found in Gr.319 at Hedeby [G581], and at Balnakeil [G2246] in Scotland, but unsheathed swords from College Green [G1914], Kilmainham [G1966], and Ka.277 [G2060] at Kaupang were also found without tips. The sword from Ka.322 [G2092] at Kaupang was missing its whole lower third despite being sheathed in its scabbard for burial.

The reasoning behind the removal and/or retention of the blade point could be manifold. A number of scholars have connected the compositional form of the sword with the anatomical configuration of the human body (Solli 2008; Brunning 2013, 2017; Kristiansen 2016). In Kristiansen's examination of the significance of weapon and seafaring motifs in women's jewellery styles in Late

Bronze Age Scandinavia, he calls attention to the similarities of the sword and the phallus as instruments of penetration. Kristiansen (2014:340) suggests that the combination of the two motifs in the depiction of male figures portrays an unambiguous message concerning the sources of male power (cf. Nøttveit 2006; Skogstrand 2016). Could the removal of the blade point echo the loss of the source of an individual's potency in death? Brunning (2013) concedes this could be an apt interpretation for early medieval swords, particularly in light of the connection between swords, wealth and power, but she sets greater store by an alternative interpretation whereby both human and sword bodies are conceptualised using the same corporeal schema. In this vein, swords and people share the same 'body map' (Sørensen 2010:55).

"Were [swords] perceived by some as having bodies and faces? The 'body' comprised the blade: the largest, most fundamental and functional part of the sword, without which it could not perform its tasks; and the home of the sword's history and personality – inner elements known only by those with which it has the closest relationships: those, for want of a better analogy, who knew what was 'inside the scabbard' both literally and metaphorically. The 'face' comprised the hilt: the part that could be recognised on sight; which was altered and embellished to create a different identity; and which eventually demonstrated signs of age".

(Brunning 2013:233)

This is an intriguing concept and not one without precedent (Fredriksen 2005; Lund 2013). Using this perspective, it seems entirely reasonable to suggest that the removal of the blade point, the site at which the life force of the sword resided, transformed the sword from a living being to one of the dead?

Bodily Engagement

A practice that is commonly observed in burials of this period is the deposition of weapons referencing the body of the deceased or placed in intimate connection so that both bodies create an image of a single being. The fragmentation and

partial deposition of swords specifically suggests that they, as a particular class of weapon, were conceptualised as a partible being, much like many animals and some humans. A number of modes of modification single out swords as an object of special status; swords were more commonly modified than all other weapons and modified in a greater diversity of ways. Moreover, the curation, retention and deposition of specific parts of the sword— a varied suite of depositional practices not identified significantly in any other class of weapon in this sample— suggests that their material form had been embedded with concepts of the body. From this perspective, the manner in which their bodies relate to the bodies of humans and animals in burials brings new meaning to these corporeal arrangements.

Bodily Arrangement

Traditionally, the placement of weapons in relation to the body has been taken as an expression of how the weapon would have been experienced in life; swords on the left indicate a right-handed warrior and the reverse if on the right; swords located at waist height suggests this warrior wore a scabbard attached to a belt while swords placed at the shoulder or near the head of the deceased indicate that this individual preferred it strapped over the shoulder; placing the sword diagonally across the chest of the individual is usually conceived as an alternate expression of wearing it on the shoulder (Davidson 1998:11–12). While embodied experiences of material culture are fundamental to the meanings with which they are invested and the position they hold within the wider ontological structures of a society, there are a range of depositional practices which cannot be explained by sartorial habits or ease of manipulation in combat. Most recently, Sayer and colleagues (Sayer *et al.* 2019) have explored the relationship between positioning of swords in Viking Age burials in relation to human bodies. They have demonstrated that there was a clear and direct association

being articulated through the interaction of weapons and bodies in early medieval graves.

The placement of the weapon in relation with the body of the deceased could be established for just 20 of the total 95 CM weapons in this sample. A slightly greater number of weapons were placed near to the body (n=12) than in direct contact (n=8). When placed near to the body, each weapon type seems to relate to the body in unique ways. Spears are only found on the right side of the body or at the head in the case of the Woodstown example [G2007], while swords seem to be positioned in a greater range of orientations relational to the human body (Figure 40 and Figure 41). There does seem to be a slight preference for the deposition of swords on the lower left side of the body, which supports previous interpretations suggesting that swords were placed as worn in life (Davidson 1998:11). However, Sayer and colleagues take this in evidence that the weapon could be treated both practically in some Viking Age burials— where swords were "placed as worn, or fixed to the body, inside the coffin: a hidden position that suggests the sword was understood to be a tool or weapon"— and symbolically in other burials, forming an overt display of power and identity (Sayer *et al.* 2019).

Weapons of all types were probably deposited using a schematic that held both the public and the private with the semiotic and embodied experience of the weapon in tension, but the fact that swords were placed in all spaces around the burial suggests it was a weapon that engaged in a range of relationships with those with whom they interacted.

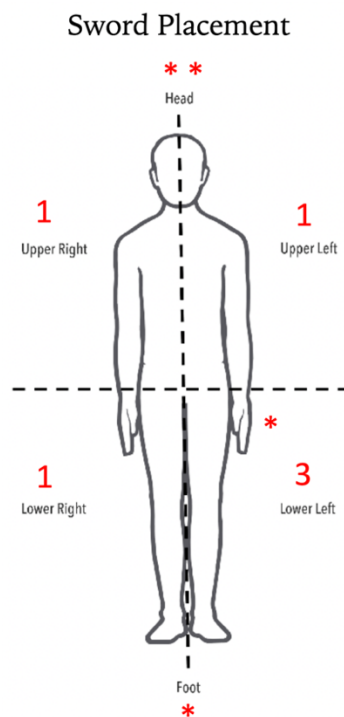


Figure 40. Placement of swords near the body. Asterisks denote placement of sections of the Woodstown [G2007] sword.

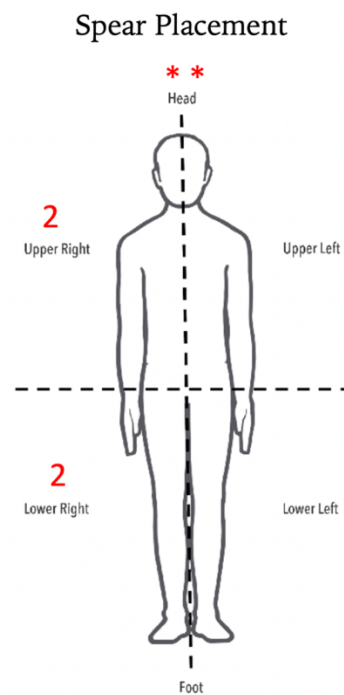


Figure 41. Placement of spearheads near the body. Asterisks denote placement of sections of the Woodstown [G2007] spear.

The special treatment and deposition of the Woodstown [G2007] sword offers a unique glimpse into the varied relationships formed between object bodies and human bodies. Here, a sword was cut in to four sections and each section was individually placed in bags (or possibly wrapped in cloth) and then deposited in different areas around the grave. A package containing the blade point was deposited in the southwest end of the grave near the individual's head, as was the sword's pommel in its own parcel. The hilt was placed by the northwest edge of the grave near the location of the individual's hip, and the middle section of the blade was in the north-eastern corner of the grave at the deceased's feet. This spatial configuration suggests that the spaces of the body were closely linked with the embodied materialities of the sword. The pommel and blade point were given prime positioning at the head of the deceased, perhaps because these two portions of the sword mediated all action between the sword wielder and their opponent, making them of the greatest embodied power. The placement of the

hilt near the hip cites how it was interacted with every day, perhaps hanging from a belt around his waist, while the blade, the site of the weapon's performance, personality and power, lay at his feet.

Body on Body

Just eight CM weapons were placed in direct physical contact with the human deceased, all of which were swords (n=5) and shields (n=3). The nature of bodily contact is quite standardised, with all contact occurring on the upper section of the human body. The placement of the shield upon the upper chest or face of the deceased is a common motif observed across the Viking World (Ardwisson 1984:38; Oppegaard 2015:56–57) and the three modified shield bosses in the sample were placed in this fashion. A shield with a struck boss in a burial at South Great George Street [G2000] in Dublin was placed upon the chest of the deceased, while the unique shield from the Woodstown [G2007] burial discussed above was placed at the man's neck. The thrice struck boss from Gr.11 at Westness [G2367] (Figure 37) was found resting against the deceased's head, presumably having been placed above him at the time of deposition.

The deposition of the swords also reveals a distinct connection with the deceased's body that further supports the interpretation that both entities were deposited using the same body schema; sword hilts were always placed in the same direction as the deceased's head, while the body of the sword always lay lengthways upon or under the body of the deceased (Figure 42).

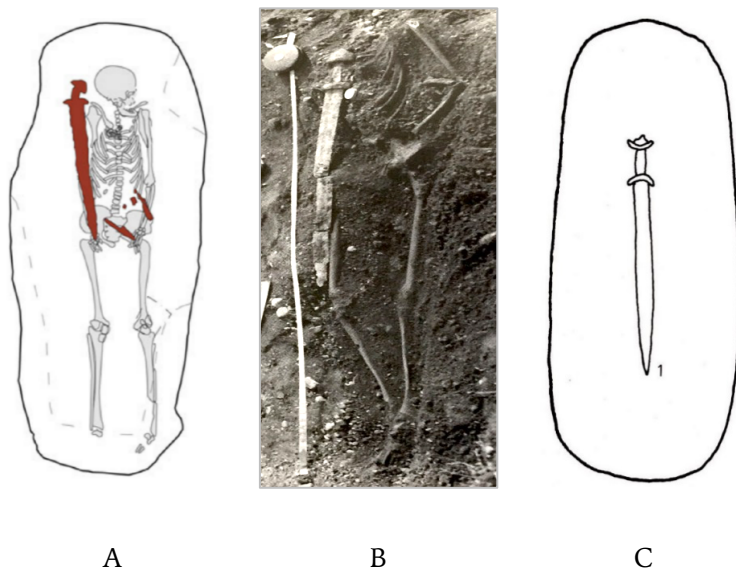


Figure 42. Interaction between sword body and human body. A) Cumwhitton 3 [G138]. Skeleton superimposed for representational purposes. After Sayer et al. (Sayer et al. 2019). B) Inchicore 1934C [G1933]. After Harrison & Ó Floinn (2014:272 ill.161). C) Hedeby 319 [G581]. After Arents & Eisenschmidt (2010:327 taf.27).

Although instances of contact between human and object bodies are fewer than those observed between human bodies, or human and animal bodies, the degree to which bodies merge is considerable. We have already seen that complete bodily interaction in animal burials only occurred between animal bodies; no human and animal bodies lay in complete contact with each other (pp.196–200). This is not the case in the human-weapon burials— when physical interaction occurs, it is much more comprehensive (Table 55).

Being	No. Bodies in Contact	Total No. of Bodies	Rel. Freq. of Contact (%)
Human-Human	43	144	30
Animal-Human	19	92	21
Weapon-Human	8	49	16

Table 55. Proportion of individuals placed in bodily contact with each other. Each weapon here conceptualised as a body.

The swords from Cumwhitton [G138] and Inchicore [G1933] were found in similar positions; both hilts lay at the shoulder of the deceased with their length running along the body pointing to their feet. This may also have been the case at Tibberaghney [G2006], where the upper section of the blade with the cross guard were found attached to all that remained of the deceased— a single

forearm. Another potential example may be observed in Hedeby 319 [G581], where a Petersen Type J sword was found interred in its scabbard, which concealed the fact that it was missing the point of its blade. The sword was placed in the centre of the grave cut, slightly to the right in a manner reminiscent of the placement of the Cumwhitton and Tibberaghney swords, with all traces of its burial companion gone. That is, of course, if it was accompanied by a human at all. Do we have here a case of the formal burial of a thing-person?

The final case of intimate corporeal interaction is the Balnakeil burial [G2246] from Scotland. This burial will be discussed more fully shortly for its remarkable use of concealment as a means of constructing a complex reconfiguration of personhood for the young boy who was inhumed and the community that bade him farewell. What is important for this discussion is that the Balnakeil boy's sword was placed under his body, lying with its hilt towards his head and its point laying under his pelvis, pointing towards his feet. Corrosion on the hilt preserved some feathers, inferring that the boy (and sword) had been lain on some soft bedding within the grave cut (Batey & Paterson 2013:634). This moving burial assemblage, centred on the boy and his sword, poignantly demonstrates the strength of relationships that can be forged in life and in death, with the person-like qualities of the sword emerging through its shared furnishing of a soft bed and its close communion with the young boy's body.

Echoed Motifs

The special regard in which ceremonially modified weapons were held by their familiars is expressed not solely through intimate bodily contact, but through the special care with which many of the objects were placed in the burials. For a great number of ceremonially modified weapons, information regarding their placement was recorded during excavation, no doubt because of the unique

circumstances in which they were encountered by the excavators. A broad analysis of these records reveals that a number of configural motifs were used by Viking Age communities when burying ceremonially modified weapons. Some of these practices include stacking, spacing and other forms of reconfiguration in order to articulate transformations of the body and the person.

Concealment

One of the most common types of special deposition observed in the research sample concerns the concealment of weapons once they are modified. This includes weapons that are hidden from view, weapons that are used to hide other features from view, the wrapping of weapons in bags or loose textiles (as has been discussed in relation to context-use on page 256), as well as the replacing of swords in their scabbards.

Concealment appears to be the only universal depositional trend which can be identified across all study areas in the Scandinavian sample and the Western Diaspora.²⁶ It appears to be particularly prevalent in Scotland, where concealed depositions occur in a number of burials. The Balnakeil burial [G2246] identified above is curiously characterised for its use of concealment. The Balnakeil boy's sword was broken up and replaced in its scabbard, concealing the fact that its blade-point was not deposited with the rest of the sword, perhaps being retained by someone at the funeral. The sword was then further concealed under the young boy's body. Not only were both the boy and the sword placed on feathered bedding within a cut lined with straw, but the presence of mineralised straw elsewhere in the grave suggested that the straw had also been placed over the

²⁶ Except for Iceland, where the practice of ritual modification appears to be exceedingly rare.

burial as well (Batey & Paterson 2013:634). Even more curiously, the other items of the weapon set, the shield and spear, were placed in a triangular arrangement over the boy's head, concealing his neck and face (Figure 43).



Figure 43. Balnakeil burial [G2246] during excavation. Note shield and spear arrangement over his head and scabbard and sword in lower levels under his body. After Batey & Paterson (2013:634 fig.3) © Highland Regional Council.

The reason underlying the concealment of his head is unclear and a number of interpretations have been ventured in the years succeeding the boy's discovery. Low and colleagues (2000:26) have suggested that the arrangement served as a canopy to protect his head, which is lent credibility by the other aspects of the burial which demonstrate a great level of care and affection for the boy. Conversely, Batey and Paterson (2013:642) have suggested that it is more probable that the spear had rested upon the shield board and took on the semi-vertical positioning once the board collapsed. It is also possible that the shield and spear arrangement were intended to conceal his face from view. Osteological analysis has shown that his skull did not develop properly so that his face would have appeared asymmetrical, with his left eye-orbit set higher than the right eye-orbit (Graham-Campbell & Batey 1998:141). Whether the concealment of his

face was motivated out of a concern for onlookers at his funeral, or possibly to protect a perceived vulnerability, we will never know. However, the shared concealment of the ceremonially modified sword and the young boy, combined with the fact that each other's bodies were used to conceal the other, suggests that a condition of personhood was held by both beings. The question remains: *was the personhood of the boy being drawn upon to constitute that of the sword-person, or was the concealment of the boy's body by the weapons being drawn upon to mask the boy's personhood? Alternately, was the sword concealed because it was conceptualised as an extension of the boy's personhood, which was also concealed?*

Concealment as a depositional motif also extends to modified swords which have been replaced in their scabbard or placed in bags or boxes when deposited in the grave. We have already discussed instances of this practice in relation to weapons that have been interred in their own distinct contexts (p.249), and one could argue that scabbards may represent another iteration of this practice. However, upon further reflection, scabbards may have been conceived more like clothing than a formal burial 'structure', particularly in that swords were probably kept in their sheathes while they (and their wielder) went about their daily life. Accordingly, it may have seemed fitting to 'dress' or shroud the sword-body prior to burial.

Three of the five ceremonially modified swords recovered from Scotland have been subsequently re-sheathed; examples include the broken sword in the Scar boat burial [G2342] in Orkney which was placed back into its scabbard to lie beside an adult male, as was the sword in the Swordle Bay boat burial [G2355] in Argyll. All of these burials have been interpreted to contain high-status individuals, based on how comprehensively and finely they were furnished (Halstad McGuire 2009:172; Batey and Paterson 2013:653; Harris et al. 2017:201). Furthermore, a connection to an elite warrior identity has been

suggested for both of the men in the Swordle Bay and Scar boat burials (Halstad McGuire 2009:159; Harris et al. 2017:201). A possible link between the practice and warriorhood is further supported by the broken sword of the 'warrior' in grave 511 at Repton [G196] in Derbyshire, which was also found in its scabbard lying beside him.

Scandinavian examples can be identified at Hedeby in Gr.319 [G581], which produced a sword found in its scabbard with part of the blade broken off (Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010:92), while Ka.322 [G2092] at Kaupang contained an incomplete broken damascened sword in its scabbard. Pattern-welding and damascening has been associated with high-status and wealthy burials (Lang and Ager 1989:115; Gansum 2004:51) so it may be reasonable to assume that this individual was either of these two things. Conversely, the Hedeby burial bucks this trend in that it is not overtly lavish or complex, but formed by a single plain earth cut containing no other structural features or components other than the sword (Arents & Eisenschmidt 2010:92). This challenges the link between the replacement of broken swords in scabbards and high-status individuals. However, only six swords were recovered from Hedeby in total (compared with 58 at Kaupang and 62 in Ireland) so the recovery of the sword indicates the person with which it was buried must have been of some kind of distinctive status.

Another possible example of this practice is the Workington sword [G230], which was found ceremonially bent in its scabbard in Cumbria, England. It is unfortunate that no burial details were recorded upon its recovery to clarify the nature of the bending or to confirm this as a variation of the same practice involving broken swords. Sørensen (2010:55) has suggested that the practice of clothing the body orders the deceased's social appearance, defining the body as

a means of articulating social orders and creating specific maps of the body that could be deciphered by onlookers. Perhaps sheathing was a means of providing bodily order to swords in the same manner that human bodies were variable dressed and shrouded?

Ordered Reconfiguration

Considering that breakage is the most common form of modification observed in the research sample, it is not surprising that fragmented weapons were ordered and reconfigured in many varied and distinct ways that represent the diverse positions they held in the relational webs formed between human and non-human bodies. Swords feature prominently in reconfiguration practices, but they are not the only class of weapon to be treated so. Reconfiguration practices utilise different modes of fragmentation, deposition and body schemas to articulate complex relationships between the weapon, the assemblage, the deceased and the living community.

Just like the dismembered horse in multiple boat burial Ka.294-297 [G2074] at Kaupang who was placed amidships in rough anatomical order, broken swords have also been found configured in a structurally correct manner. The best example of this depositional practice is the Inchicore burial [G1933] from Ireland. The weapon had been broken into three parts, all the same size, and placed in structural or ‘anatomical’ order upon the chest of the young man with whom it was interred, from the hilt on his right shoulder to the point near his right knee (Figure 42.b). Similarly, the reconfiguration of the Cronk Moar [G2017] sword’s deposition caused the excavators to marvel at the orderliness of the arrangement. Perhaps this may be one of the underlying intentions of replacing broken or bent swords in their scabbards. We have seen that distribution was not the main concern when fragmentation was performed as a

mode of ceremonial modification, as the majority of broken weapons were deposited in a whole state. Thus, perhaps the use of the scabbard facilitated reconfiguration. Again, this signals that alteration and transformation were the underlying interests in the performance of modification.

Swords that have been fragmented into two or more parts are occasionally found in a stacked formation with each piece placed one on top of the other. The sword recovered from the Ballateare multiple burial [G2012] was broken in to three or four pieces and then stacked orderly next to the man's right leg. Likewise, the sword found in the northern stern of the multiple boat burial Ka.298-300 [G2074] at Kaupang was broken in to three pieces and stacked one on top of the other next to the remains of the male with whom the sword was associated. Remarkably, the hilt sections of both swords were placed uppermost in the stack. The focus of the hilt as the most prominent feature of the stack is intriguing. As discussed in the section on patterns of breakage on swords (pp.232), the hilt is only occasionally the focal point for breakage on this type of weapon, and a clear trend for the removal and special treatment of blade points over other parts of swords is also evident. The primacy of the hilt in this depositional practice could be interpreted a number of ways. Potentially, the vertical stacking echoes how the sword was worn in life with hilt upward. The hilt's prime positioning could serve as an acknowledgement of the hilt's fundamental purpose of connecting the weapon with its wielder— the hand's engagement with the grip is the essential point of contact between the two entities and so was conceived of as the most materially potent element.

However, another interpretation provided by Brunning (2017) may be more apt. Sword hilts and pommels were often richly ornamented and this may be key to their uppermost positioning when stacked. The decoration on each face of a

pommel regularly differs, with plainer motifs existing on one side and a more elaborately ornamented motif on the other. As identified by Brunning (2017:412), the increased wear on the plain sides of pommels suggest they were facing inwards to the body when worn, while more richly decorated sides exhibiting less wear were displayed outwardly. This outward display indicates that swords had a 'public face' that was visually distinctive and easily recognised by the community. In the same manner, customisations through its life would have enhanced its unique character (Brunning 2017:412–413). Accordingly, it was appropriate to place the 'face' of the sword upwards just as one would usually place a human body.

The deposition of ceremonially modified weapons in other burials also appears to reference the bodily treatment of the deceased with whom they are buried. At Knoxpark [G1990], a spearhead was found severed at the neck, while the individual with whom it was deposited had also been decapitated. As we know, grave Ka.298-300 [G2074] at Bikjholberget, contained a broken and stacked sword. Although the man with whom it was deposited was buried intact, he was joined in the grave by another man whose remains had been totally dismembered and stacked in a pile, while the remains of the original female interment in the boat had been removed and similarly stacked on a rock shelf immediately west of the boat.

From this discussion, it is clear that ceremonially modified weapons were not only transformed from one state to another alongside the human deceased by way of bending, breaking and striking, but they also echoed the manner of their deposition in numerous ways. Some human dead were shrouded, dismembered and missing body parts, while some ceremonially modified weapons were wrapped, fragmented and deposited in incomplete states. The similar treatment

and deposition shared by some humans and weapons suggest it is entirely possible that they held a similar ontological status in the minds of Viking Age communities.

Ceremonial Modification and Thing–Persons

This chapter has explored the ceremonial modification of weaponry and its role in constituting Viking Age persons in burial. The somewhat standardised types of ceremonial modification that weapons received in combination with the varied manner in which they were interred in burials, makes clear that the practice was a pan–regional tradition which was carried out with local variation and could accommodate a fair degree of personalisation. That these weapons were singled out for ceremonial modification speaks to a status that worked on a number of levels.

At the broadest of scales, weaponry was embedded with meanings that drew upon the social status of warriorhood and the ritualization of warfare and violence which permeated all spheres of Viking Age society (Price 2019). At the smallest, most personal of scales, the diversity in the modes of modification and deposition observed suggests the practice also hinged upon the intimate connections that arose between specific people and objects. Certainly, the fact that ceremonial modification overwhelmingly focused on a single weapon within a grave good assemblage may be taken in evidence that the modification ritual was not fixated on weaponry as a class of object requiring ceremonial treatment. Rather, ceremonial modification was concentrated on specific objects which necessitated ritual processing, that is, the weapon had to be meaningful in the first place. This may be the reason why we also see ceremonial modification occurring on brooches, staffs and coins, amongst other classes of object.

At the same time, it does seem that swords specifically held a special status amongst weapons. The unparalleled rates of fragmentation and partial deposition of swords specifically compared to all other weapons suggests that they were widely considered a partible being, much like many animals and some humans. The trends of their modification attest to this special status. That is, swords were more commonly modified than all other weapons and modified in a greater diversity of ways. Swords were also found in all spaces of the grave, suggesting that it engaged in a range of relationships with those with whom they interacted more so than other forms of weaponry. Moreover, the varied manner of the curation, retention and deposition of specific parts of swords suggests that, while all weapons embodied the potential for partibility, swords held a special status within this ontology, in which their partibility could be more fluidly arranged to articulate a greater range of relationships and concepts.

One such concept which may explain the special treatment swords received is that— in line with their description in Old Norse poetry and kennings— their material form had been embedded with concepts of the body. The influence of Old Norse poetry permeates much of the writing contained within the pages of antiquarian journals and its legacy is still felt in the discourse of Scandinavian archaeology today. There is good reason for this too, as the compelling narratives that unfold in Old Norse stories often involve motifs that are supported in the archaeological record. Brunning has underscored the ‘vivid, creative and tangible’ portrayal of weapons in these sources, stating that Old Norse texts describe swords as possessing personalities, having distinctive appearances, widely known reputations and celebrated life histories (Brunning 2013:221, 2017:409). Moreover, sometimes the swords bore specific names and acted as powerful agents in warfare and ritual.

But, does the archaeological record present to us swords with human-like body maps because the Old Norse stories actually reflect the animation of objects in Viking Age ontologies, or have we projected a narrative tradition thick with its own specific meaning and significances onto a material world for which it was not intended? It is entirely possible, being that there is no naturalised separation between the mental and physical properties of the world— both being affected in the construction of embodied persons and practices— that a conceptual framework emphasising analogy and fluidity between bodies is appropriate either way.

However, this also raises another series of question: *Should these acts of ceremonial modification be read as a means of materialising the transition of human bodies from the realm of the living to the dead? Or is the practice of ceremonial modification a funerary custom appropriate to the subjective ontological status of the weapons themselves— as object-persons— requiring the same funerary treatment as any other body?* I suggest that through the construction of complex burial assemblages which utilised the conceptual and material similarities of object bodies and human bodies, the deceased's personhood was reconfigured and materialised through the transformative power of the funerary ritual. Ceremonial modification of weaponry was a means of enacting this transformation. But, while ceremonial modification may have served as a metaphor for the reconfiguration of the deceased from the state of a living person to that of 'the dead', the shared embodied experiences of human and object bodies in these contexts intimates a potential that each entity shared a similarity in being necessitating shared ritual processing.

In previous chapters, I have demonstrated that the ontic construct of 'person' was more fluid than a modern western conception would usually recognise. The

manner of human and object bodily treatment and interaction within Viking Age burials presented here visibly attests to this fluidity. Along these lines, it may be appropriate to consider, contingent on the specific relationships articulated in each case, object–human multiple burials alongside the more traditional configurations. These themes are taken up more fully in the succeeding chapter which ties together the major findings of the thesis in light of the research questions driving my research agenda.

The Other Body

Producing Personhood

This thesis began with a retelling of the discovery of the Litlu-Núpar burials in Iceland, where we followed a young boy on a summer's day, weaving his way along a grassy riverbank in pursuit of a honeybee on the way back to its hive. The boy knew he was likely going to uncover the bee's golden hive, just as Matthías Þórðarson knew he was likely going to uncover a burial on the very same spot. But the form of both the hive and the Litlu-Núpar burials were not what either expected. Þórðarson never knew the complexity of the burial configuration that would slowly reveal itself when he uncovered the first of the Litlu-Núpar burials. Just as we are only now coming to terms with the incredibly diverse spatial and temporal dimensions of Viking Age burial practices in Scandinavia and across the diaspora.

The research presented in this thesis has focused specifically on one mode of burial which captures many aspects of this multi-dimensionality— the multiple burial rite. The intentional configuration of multiple persons together is a powerful concept and one, I would argue, whose potential to offer insight into one of the most fundamental questions of concern to archaeologists— just what did it mean to be a *person* in the past— is unparalleled. The pursuit of Viking Age personhood stimulated the three avenues of this research, which aimed, firstly, to establish the nature of the multiple burial rite, secondly, to explore the ways in which personhood was constituted for those interred in multiple burials, and thirdly, to probe the potential that the relationships between some humans,

animals and things in these contexts produced persons in *other bodies*. In this chapter, each of these themes are discussed in reference to the results of this study, and subsequently considered in relation to the wider discourse.

The Nature of Multiple Burial

The research presented in the previous chapters has provided much-needed clarification of the nature of the multiple burial practice in Viking Age contexts. I have shown that the multiple burial rite was not a form of deviant practice used to demarcate society's 'Others', nor was it simply a means of interring 'Ordinary' familial relations. A critique of both of these characterisations has been offered in Chapter Two. Taking deviancy into consideration first, the connection between multiple burial and otherness has been weakened by an increasing awareness that a concept of 'deviancy' rests upon an assumption of normative behaviour. In many cases these assumptions are based upon a modern Western understanding of respectful funerary practice which may not suit the cultural context onto which these ideas are projected. But more importantly, a concept of deviancy is not substantiated by the findings of this research.

Retiring Deviancy

The classification of deviant burial practice revolves around the observation of traits which do not fit well with the majority of attributes understood to fall within 'normative' modes of funerary custom for a specific cultural group (Geake 1992; Taylor 2005; Thäte 2007; Reynolds 2009). However, the ability to discern alterity in the burial record of the Viking Age is greatly challenged by the fact that diversity is the 'normal' mode of burial practice during this period. Whether this diversity is produced by the existence of discrete ethnic, social and political groups— thereby undermining the cultural homogeneity implied by the designation of the 'Viking Age' (Svanberg 2003)— or that there were simply

many 'normal' ways to bury the dead within a pan-Scandinavian cultural tradition (Price 2012:259), the cause remains unclear. The answer probably resides somewhere between the two ideas at any given moment, but either way, the inescapable fact that funerary diversity is the abiding orthodoxy of Viking Age burial practices means that identifying deviancy in these contexts is problematic, to say the least. Furthermore, an analysis of multiple burial attributes in comparison with its single counterpart suggests that there is very little to distinguish between the two.

The analysis presented in Chapter Three demonstrates that individuals of all kinds— men, women, children and the elderly— were afforded multiple burial, taken in confirmation that it was not any social aspect of their identity which brought about their inclusion in this form of burial. However, the differential frequency of various sex and age groups in relation to the number of individuals interred together does suggest that these factors did hold some influence (e.g. p.91).

On a superficial level, there may be some connection with the practice of multiple burial and social status; individuals in multiple burial were found to be twice more likely to have been furnished with grave goods and buried with animals than individuals in single burial (pp.151 and 202). The relationship between material culture and social status is far from straightforward, with cultural, social, and religious factors all influencing the manner in which one is buried. It has been traditionally accepted that the greater number of jewellery items and weapons deposited within a burial, the higher the social standing of the individual (Solberg 1985) and in many instances material wealth appears to be connected with the implements and imagery of warfare (Hofseth 1981; Pedersen 2014; Aannestad 2018). While warfare does not hold an exclusive

connection with multiple burial by any means, there is evidence to support its association in some cases.

An analysis of the treatment of human bodies in multiple and single burials found relatively little difference between the positioning, arrangement and orientation of these individuals. However, prone placement (widely considered the quintessential act of deviant burial) was only identified in the single burial data, while considerably more violent trauma was identified in multiple burials. Rather than being explained as a deviant characteristic of multiple burial practice, the nature of the wounds appears to have resulted from engagement in combat, an interpretation which is also supported by the geographical distribution of these cases throughout the lands of the Western Diaspora. In all, these findings counter claims that multiple burial was used for the burial of deviants, instead supporting the use of multiple burial in areas of military activity, colonisation, and most significantly, its wider connection with processes of settlement (pp.62 and 145).

Belonging to Land

The second interpretive framework within which multiple burials have been conceived is the co-burial of kin. The discussion on kinship as a structuring principle of burial practices, offered in Chapter Two, has demonstrated that it likely did underpin the construction of many multiple burials during the Viking Age. However, the evidence suggests that kinship did not function in the same manner as earlier interpretations have held, in which individuals of the same family who died contemporaneously were believed to have been buried together, or that strong emotional relations obliged the consecutive burial of close family members. Rather, a notion of kinship operated within a framework of settlement, and more generally concerned the notion of belonging.

The practice of multiple burial has a sustained connection with concepts of settlement, both in the context of ancestral land rights and in colonial contexts. Specifically, multiple burials were constructed more consistently and widely across the Western Diaspora than in the Scandinavian sample, with clustering occurring in areas with documented military activity (p.62).²⁷ In fact, a greater proportion of the Western Diaspora's corpus contains contemporary burials than anywhere else in this study. Combined with the observation that many of these individuals show battle-related trauma, it seems that the practice was regularly used for the burial of combatants during the Scandinavian colonisation of the British Isles. It has already been established that there was much overlap between the warrior retinue and the family unit in both its metaphorical and physical formation (Brink 2008; Raffield et al. 2015). Perhaps the merging of these two concepts brought about the use of multiple burial in contexts of martial funerary practices.

Alternately, there is evidence to suggest that colonisation, even from its earliest stages, may have been viewed as a family affair, which is supported by the recovery of women and children in burials associated with the Great Army in England (e.g. the charnel deposit at Repton, the dual cremation at Heath Wood [G162], and perhaps even the woman and child at Sedgeford [G204]). This idea is certainly validated by the recovery of the father and son inhumation at Repton [G196] and the brothers in the Salme II boat burials in Estonia.

²⁷ Of course, these results may only be valid in relation to the current research sample, further analysis of multiple burial practices throughout Scandinavia will have to be undertaken to confirm these findings.

But multiple burial's connection with colonisation may have been a relatively late evolution of a practice with deep roots in the landowning traditions of Iron Age Scandinavian society. The primary function of the kin group was to assert, honour and defend the family's inherited land and *óðal* rights (Gurevich 1985:45; Zachrisson 1994:219; Christiansen 2006:48). Accordingly, burials and runestones served as the tangible and overt mechanisms through which families could communicate their lineage claims within a largely pre-literate society (Pedersen 2006:351). While these burials need not have been multiple, the very fact that burials were used to establish relations between individuals suggests that the multiple burial may have been of profound use to that effect. Specifically, a number of studies focusing on antecedent burial, or 're-use', supports the practices' connection with ancestral legitimisation and *óðal* claims (Zachrisson 1994, 2017; Hållans Stenholm 2006, 2012; Thäte 2007; Leonard 2011).

Finally, the multiple burial rite was practiced commonly, if not consistently to the same degree, across all regions of this study, and its observation in all study areas suggests that it served an established and specific role amongst the range of diverse customs characterising Viking Age burial practices. As follows, it should be considered no more 'deviant' than any other similarly occasional mode of Viking Age interment (i.e. boat burial which, too, holds its own particular purposes and meanings). Multiple burials were not kept separate from other modes and areas of burial either. In fact, they were usually well integrated within existing landscapes of mortuary significance, making use of the monuments and burial grounds of local communities and causing limited disturbance to existing infrastructure in the process.

There are some exceptions to this general observation, most notoriously the disturbance caused at Balladoole in Mann (p.64). However, the fact that some burial disturbance occurred even within local communities at Kaupang and Hedeby, far outnumbering any instances identified in the Western Diaspora, suggests that the behaviour was not underpinned by political motivations (contra Tarlow 1997; see also Bill and Daly 2012). Rather, this behaviour may be an indication that the bodies of the dead were invested with a range of meanings within Viking Age mentalities, requiring the manipulation, curation or destruction of skeletal material in service of an alternate purpose. One such purpose may have been the embodied affirmation of belonging to a lineage, and to a landscape. Could this be the reason why Viking Age communities engaged in such lengthy dialogues with the dead?

The Constitution of Persons

There are many scales of personhood in production in the Viking Age multiple burials of the Western Viking World, of which I will focus on just two. The first relates to how personhood was constructed or transformed at the individual scale of each burial as observed through bodily practices. The second concerns a much broader understanding of what it was to be a person in Viking Age society as articulated through the multiple burial tradition.

Producing Persons Through the Body

I have already demonstrated that multiple burials encompass vivid and dynamic relational possibilities by bringing together bodies, things, materials and practices in entangled assemblages. The careful and deliberate configuration of these entities through time and space were used to constitute the personhood of those interred in complex and multi-dimensional ways. While all of these relationships are worth intensive study, I have limited myself specifically to the

ways in which persons were formed through the manipulation and treatment of bodies. Bodies are the product of diverse social practices and relations; they are inscribed with modalities and meanings through engagement with their world, and they reflexively shape the world through their own embodied experiences and relations.

This line of inquiry proved fruitful; the analysis provided in Chapters Three and Four have demonstrated that the operation of many possible modes of personhood were articulated through the treatment and configuration of bodies in multiple burials. Overall, an interesting finding was the observation that bodies in multiple burials appear to have been subjected to a greater degree of ritual treatment involving fragmentation than individuals in single burials (p.145). Dismemberment and decapitation were not common treatments in the wider sample, but a handful of cases exhibited distinctive modes of burial which were enacted using bodily manipulations. Of particular significance is deposition of dismembered adult males with the bodies of children (p.172). It has already been shown that these burials exhibited strong temporal qualities, both in the use of considerable temporal depth in the creation of the burials, but also through the juxtaposition of youth with age.

Legal and literary sources demonstrate a child's initiation as a full social person occurred incrementally over the course of a number of rites of passage; rituals such as the presentation of a child to its father, the pouring of water, the bestowal of a name, and a child's first breast feed transformed a child from a 'pre-person' to a full member of society (Mejsholm 2008:47). Breast feeding was of substantial importance to personhood; before an infant was first fed, Norwegian law deemed it acceptable to expose or abandon the child, while the first feed also marked the child's ability to inherit from the family in Icelandic

law (Mejsholm 2008:49). These are important sources for interpreting the inclusion of children found in multiple burials.

From the analysis of the arrangement of individuals within multiple burials, it seems that no child was ever placed in their own space, independent from all others (p.164). If children were considered 'pre-persons' or less than full persons, their deposition with a companion could reflect the status of their personhood. In following, could it be that spatial independence in multiple burials was indicative of the status of a full person? This could help contextualise the observation that bodily contact between co-buried individuals was relatively rare, occurring in only a fifth of multiple burials (p.162). Furthermore, the majority of these burials involved children in contact with adults, although some all-adult burials also demonstrated this. This could support the inference that bodily contact was instigated in cases where the individuals involved were conceptualised as possessing a mutually constitutive, shared mode of relational personhood, rather than one that was conceived as purely independent.

With regards to the children buried with dismembered men, it is also possible that they were conceived of as having a special status; perhaps they were full social persons up until the moment of their death, at which time they became vibrant thing-persons? Lillehammer (2016) has shown that some children in Scandinavia may have been perceived of as powerful in their own right; the vital potentialities of children saw them buried as "instruments of regeneration and symbols of continuation", linking together concepts related to *óðal* inheritance with the power of the cosmos to ensure the family's future prosperity (Lillehammer 2016:101). Accordingly, it may be that these children were not provided with adult 'protectors' or 'carers' in death but were placed in intimate bodily connection with dismembered adult males to enact some ritual outcome,

or perhaps even to attenuate or enhance their power. Certainly, the deposition of child bodies in other unusual circumstances (cf. Lindquist 1981; Roslund 1990; Lillehammer 2011; Gotfredsen 2014; Eriksen 2017) suggest that the conceptualisation of some children's personhood differed greatly to some of their contemporaries. By inference, the personhood of the dismembered men in these burials may have been de-constituted through their relation with the powerful child. Accordingly, it may be that these burials should not be considered as multiple burials, if the dismembered bodies were conceived more like a transformative substance than a person.

The ritual treatment of some individuals within the multiple burial corpus may signify that these individuals were not considered as full social persons on the same ontological footing as others. There are a number of possible modes of personhood at work in multiple burials inferred from the manner in which bodies were engaged. It is probable that personhood was conceptualised as mutually constitutive for the majority of individuals interred together, while in some burials it appears that personhood was re-constituted or reconfigured across entities within the burial through a process of fragmentation and disembodiment. It was through this mechanism that a relational, partible personhood came to the fore, wrought to constitute the personhood of other bodies through the transformative power of the funerary ritual.

Producing Persons Through Shared Time

The second scale of personhood production mentioned above concerns the broader understanding of what it was to be a person in Viking Age minds, as it was articulated through the multiple burial rite. Perhaps the most significant finding relating to the nature of the multiple burial is the fundamental importance of temporal continuity in its construction.

A general understanding of multiple burial centres predominantly upon the contemporaneous interment of individuals, usually within the same context. This perspective may be influenced in large part by the Anglo-Saxon material. Viking Age multiple burial has not been the subject of specific and comprehensive analysis prior to this research, but the Anglo-Saxon tradition, explored by an increasing number of scholars over the last two decades (Stoodley 2002; Reynolds 2009:64–67; Mui 2018:154–198; Palmer 2019), appears to be constituted predominantly by contemporaneous burial. In fact, one of the most recent studies has shown that contemporaneous burial accounts for 54% of the Anglo-Saxon corpus (Mui 2018:158), which is a far greater proportion than that of the Viking Age tradition, coming in at just 20%. Moreover, if we consider antecedent burials as an iteration of the consecutive type, granting that they draw upon a far deeper temporal scale than usual consecutive burials, then the Viking Age multiple burial tradition commands an aspect of temporality in 80% of all cases (p.132). Thus, *temporality is a core structuring principle of the Viking Age multiple burial practice.*

This opens up a number of exciting new opportunities to study Viking Age personhood at many levels, particularly in that it appears we may have seriously underestimated the significance of *time* in the constitution of Viking Age personhood. My original fascination with the multiple burial rite centred on the identity of individuals interred in this manner and how previous interpretations could not possibly account for why only a fraction of individuals were interred with ‘another body’. From the earliest of times, antiquarians and archaeologists have ventured that ‘the other body’ was a slave, a wife, or a criminal. But if these social identities were the reason for their selection and interment in multiple burial, then why were not all slaves, all wives, all criminals, given multiple

burial? What the results of this research show is that, rather than any physical or social characteristic which marked people as appropriate candidates for multiple burial, it may have been that these individuals were conceptualised as persons with specific *temporal* qualities.

An analysis of the temporal relationships between individuals interred within consecutive multiple burials showed that perhaps only a fraction of burials may have contained individuals who may have known (or known of) each other in life (p.123). The considerable temporal dimension of consecutive burials is further emphasised in the antecedent type, which were made using pre-existing Bronze and Iron Age structures. It may be impossible to fully appreciate how Viking Age communities understood the antiquity of these burials, particularly in relation to differentiating between those from the Bronze or Iron Ages. The indiscriminate use of monuments from all periods suggests that they may not have distinguished between any one temporal relation. Alternately, in the case that they did recognise a difference (whatever that might be) it may not have mattered. This could account for the diverse use of antecedent monuments comprised of a variety of structures, thereby showing a selection process somewhat unconcerned with establishing associations to a specific 'past', a particular group of people, or just one period of time.

In addition, the material strategies used to articulate their relations with antecedents varied by region, with some interring their Viking Age dead in a manner resembling the antecedent, while others articulated a different material identity through differential use of burial contexts (e.g. p.100). The fact that trends observed in antecedent burials are also observed in the material and spatial construction of consecutive multiple burials calls in to question the separation of their investigation as two distinct modes of funerary practice.

Ultimately, it may be stated that multiple burials were concerned with the articulation of 'association' between those interred and the contexts within which they were situated. It appears to be the case that this association was not achieved simply through the use of shared space, but rather through the use of shared time.

The accentuation of time in multiple burial may suggest that Viking Age communities operated within a world view cleaved into a 'before' and 'now' dualism, and many scholars have noted the 'obsession' with which Viking Age communities reworked the material traces and meanings of the past (Williams 2016b:404). But I suggest these behaviours provide evidence to the contrary; the comprehensive engagement of varying temporal scales within multiple burials speaks to a similarly *comprehensive integration of the world of the dead with the world of the living*. If there is little archaeological evidence for the differentiation between consecutive and antecedent modes of multiple burial, then perhaps they were viewed as components of the same practice. We might even venture further out on that trembling limb and suggest that consecutive multiple burial formed the middle ground between antecedent burial practices and contemporaneous multiple burial in the Viking Age, thereby collapsing distinctions between us/them, before/after, dead/alive, and sacred/profane.

This leads me to infer that Viking Age individuals may have lived in a world in which the dead were just as much agential and participatory as the living. This is certainly supported by a growing corpus of literature which has concerned itself with evidence of ongoing interaction between the living and the dead (Hållans Stenholm 2006; Andrén 2013; Eriksen 2013; Satalecki 2014; Gardeła 2016; Klevnäs 2016; Lund and Arwill-Nordbladh 2016; Lund 2017). But, as practices that demonstrate considerable temporal depth are often considered

separately— the *re-use* of pre-Viking Age monuments for burial, as distinct from the *re-opening* of Viking Age burials to manipulate bodies and retrieve specific items, as distinct from the lengthy progression of *ritual time* in funerary ceremonies— we have overlooked the possibility that these were not just mnemonic acts but traces of an ontology in which society was mutually constituted by the dead and the living. These practices must be explored in connection with each other, rather than in isolation, to enable archaeologists to situate funerary customs within their wider social and cosmological frameworks.

An integrated and holistic perspective is emerging within the discourse which is increasingly recognising the integration of sacred and quotidian aspects of life in Viking Age societies. Eriksen (2013, 2016, 2019) has been instrumental in opening up past ontologies by exploring the merging of domestic material culture and practices with those of the funerary sphere, having studied the deposition of human bodies in domestic spaces (2017), the ritualization of doors and passageways used in both domestic and mortuary contexts (2013), the construction of mortuary houses as locations facilitating engagement with the dead (2015), and houses that are given burial rites at the end of their social lives (2016). Others are drawing similar connections. Gardęła (2016) has considered the various structural mechanisms through which communities may have engaged and worshipped the dead, and has called attention to the purposeful replication of house interiors in chamber graves, signifying that the dead were believed to have lived on in the burial. Klevnäs (2016) too, has investigated burial re-opening as a means of appropriating objects with histories, involving the 're-killing' of the deceased to force the object's surrender, while Williams (2016a) has also highlighted the referencing of architectural, sartorial and material forms in the stylistic composition of hogback stones, creating a sense of 'inhabited' mortuary spaces.

These studies demonstrate that some places in society were powerful because the living and the dead coexisted in the same time. These places may possess their own subjective time, providing a setting where the past, present and future are conflated into an 'everywhen' (Walter 1999:58, as quoted by Harke 2001:18). Accordingly, perhaps the designation of the multiple burial rite into temporal categories— contemporaneous, consecutive and antecedent— unnecessarily obscures the fact that multiple burial was conceived of as a single, unified practice, that bridges the gap between the 'before' and 'now' by creating persons of shared time in Viking Age minds.

Persons 'Not of One Shape'

The final research question of this study aimed to explore the potential for animals and things to emerge as persons through their relations with other beings in multiple burials. This involved exploring more fully how animals and some ceremonially treated weapons were included in these contexts— with a particular focus on the modes of their bodily treatment and deposition— to ascertain whether shared experiences in death suggest a shared ontological status in Viking Age minds.

Analysis of the manner in which animals were ritually treated and buried showed that they shared many of the same funerary practices as humans. Particularly, animal and human bodies experienced similar fragmentation practices and were buried using the same spatial rationale (p.190), intimating that they were similarly conceived in funerary ritual. The independence with which many animals were interred does appear to support the observation made above (in relation to the co-burial of children) that the maintenance of personal space in burial may reflect the independent status of one's personhood. I feel a degree of

discomfort suggesting such a rationale, particularly as there is a danger, here, of conflating independence with individuality. Such a conceptualisation may interpret these persons as being *Individuals* (sensu Fowler 2004). But, problematising this idea further, it does withstand scrutiny.

It is true that the majority of people in the Viking Age were buried singly. It is also true that most people in multiple burials were buried with a degree of independence, even when buried in the same context by demonstrating very little bodily contact. While this is not true for all persons in burial (especially for the 91 multiple burials comprising this corpus), it is true for the majority. By extension, it is likely that all of these people were viewed as having some type of personhood, because it seems reasonable to think that societies are made up of persons. But it does not follow that all of these people were *Individuals*. Thus, although it may seem that a concept of personal space upholds the indivisibility and totalisation of people, this mode of burial should simply be viewed as a widely accepted practice appropriate to the burial of persons in general. The fact that this extends to some animals suggests that they were also perceived to possess personhood, of a similar form to humans (whatever that may be at any point in time).

This concept is not new. Pétursdóttir made this connection back in 2010 when she examined the role of the horse in the Viking Age burials of Iceland (Pétursdóttir 2010). She draws a direct link between Hedeager's (1999) reading of the animal art of Iron Age material culture, in which persons are displayed in both animal and human form, and the construction of human–horse burials in Iceland. She asserts that the image of human and horse buried together was not simply a motif signalling the 'sign language' of the period (in which animal art was of central importance) but was the actual embodiment of the ontology that

underpinned the artistic repertoire in the first place. That is, horses were buried "*with men, among men and like men*" (Pétursdóttir 2010, my translation, original emphasis) not as a representation inspired by the art, but acting as the inspiration for the art itself. Pétursdóttir suggests that the values embodied by the horse— honour, power, prestige— were not symbolic but were achieved through a life of mutual participation between human and nonhuman beings. She also suggests that the funeral party standing at the edge of the burial may not have been able to identify where the honour of the man ended and the power of the horse began— creating one whole (Pétursdóttir 2010).

I am inclined to view animals buried using similar practices for humans as persons in their own right, while simultaneously forming two parts of a whole. I think it is undeniable that animal persons were realised through a process of mutual becoming alongside human persons, but it is through the burial practices that independent personhood is articulated for both beings. There are variations in these practices though, which seem to articulate different modes of personhood. Occasionally, the manner in which human and animal bodies merge in burials is especially suggestive of the creation of a single entity, something akin to Haraway's (1991) non-human/human cyborg. These burials present human bodies merged with animal bodies, creating an image of complete corporeal and ontological entanglement, as at Repton [G196] and St Patrick's Isle [G2033] (pp.207–210).

Similarly, the treatment and deposition of ceremonially modified weaponry suggest that it was not only animals who had the potential to merge with— or emerge as— persons through their relations with other beings within burials. This seems especially true of ceremonially modified swords. I have argued that the material form of these weapons had been embedded with concepts of the

body; many swords were dressed and shrouded for burial and, after modification, were reconfigured in ways that suggest they were conceptualised as having an anatomical order, just like humans and animals (p.266). Moreover, it seems that swords were oriented in burials using the same orientation as humans, with their heads (hilts) pointing in the same direction as the humans with whom they were buried. In all but a few burial contexts (the Ballateare burial and the boat burials at Kaupang) all humans within the multiple burials were positioned in this fashion.

Other trends in the human and animal data are echoed by the weaponry. Human individuals interred in boat burials were always placed as if travelling on the boat (p.160) and animals were positioned in bodily contact with humans at locations on the body at which bodily interaction in life would have taken place (p.198). In the same vein, swords were also arranged in burials as they would have been experienced in life, positioned beside the human with hilt at the ready (p.258).

But, do all of these shared modes of treatment and burial indicate that Viking Age people conceptualised these weapons as persons or person-like, or is ceremonial modification just a metaphor for the reconfiguration of human personhood? I suggest that it may be both. Acts of ceremonial modification, incorporating the dismemberment and decapitation some humans and animals received, may have served as a metaphor for the reconfiguration of the deceased from the state of a living person to that of 'the dead', but the shared embodied experiences of human and object bodies in these contexts intimates a potential that each entity shared a similarity in being, necessitating shared ritual processing. It seems relatively clear that animals and things contribute much to the constitution of human personhood; the embodied agencies of these beings produce the persons we excavate in burials, which is reflexively true for the

humans who produce animal-persons and thing-persons through their embodied, emotional, and cosmological relations. The configuration of animal, thing and human bodies in Viking Age burials visibly attests to an ontic fluidity of being *a person*, while also demonstrating the countless ways that each being shaped the personhood of the other over the course of their lives through a process of mutual becoming extending into death.

Viking Age Persons

These findings contribute to the established discourse within Viking Age archaeology concerned with exploring the position of humans, animals and things within Late Iron Age Scandinavian ontologies. Much of the work carried out within this theme is based upon the premise that Old Norse 'persons' were culturally defined in the image of all of these beings. Along these lines, and contingent with the specific relationships articulated in each case, it seems appropriate to consider animal-human and thing-human burials alongside the more traditional configurations of human-human multiple burials. This becomes imperative if what we hope to achieve through an investigation of the multiple burial rite is the recovery of Viking Age persons, and specifically those who are buried together. If we subscribe to a perspective in which Viking Age ontologies accommodate persons taking many forms, then multiple burial theory must be reconfigured. Our focus on bounded and totalised Individuals must shift to one focused on the category of *person*, whether that happens to reside within the constraints of the human body, across a number of 'other bodies' or within no bodies.

This necessitates a reworking of our concept of 'burial' also. We already make a distinction to a certain extent by not incorporating 'votive depositions' of human remains into wider considerations of burial practices. We view human remains

in deposits as vibrant things rather than persons, based on a perceived lack of formal burial structure, which is reinforced by our preference for bodily integrity, as well as modes of personhood that adhere to the totality of the human form. But we must ask ourselves, is a burial defined by a structure, a body, or a person? I would argue that a person makes a burial, not a body. Accordingly, there may also be room to consider cenotaphs— containing thing–persons rather than human bodies— and other 'non-burial' funerary phenomena as true burials within our syntheses.

Final Thoughts

In this thesis, I have examined the role of the multiple burial as a particular mortuary practice centred on the co-burial of people, animals and things, with a view to exploring how persons were constituted through these relational webs. A broader aim of this work was to gain greater insight into just what it was to be a person in the Viking Age and delve into the potentialities of ‘other bodies’ to emerge as persons from these relationships too. In this final chapter, I present a condensed consideration of my findings, demonstrating how they sit within the current discourse, and point to some future research directions that have emerged through the course of this study.

Addressing the Research Aims

My first aim was to better establish the nature of the multiple burial rite to situate it within the wider scope of burial practices observed across the Viking World. This involved examining the material, spatial and temporal strategies used in their construction, as well as investigating who was afforded a multiple burial, how they were configured in relation to one another, and how they were treated in these contexts.

The analysis—based upon a vast dataset of both single and multiple burials that should hopefully be of interest to other scholars—showed that the multiple burial rite was a common practice observed across all areas of the Western Viking World. Although the rite was used less frequently than other forms of

burial practice, it should be considered as a standard component of the suite of burial practices performed in the Viking Age. Individuals of all kinds were afforded multiple burials, and various material strategies were used to articulate relationships between them. An element of monumentality underpinned multiple burials in Britain while the burials of Iceland and the Scandinavian sample appear not to have differentiated between single and multiple burials in any major way. However, the greater proportional inclusion of animals and grave goods in multiple burials indicates there is some connection with individuals of a specific social standing. Combined, these material and spatial qualities served to articulate a temporal continuity that functioned at a number of scales.

The second aim of this study, to consider the ways in which personhood was produced through the multiple burial rite, stemmed from the realisation that this particular funerary custom brings together bodies, things, and practices in entangled assemblages that provide a wealth of relational possibilities to explore. At the heart of this question was an interest in what constituted a person in Viking Age society.

This research found that personhood was constituted through a diverse range of relationships between bodies, materials, time and space in multiple burials. However, a key finding was the frequency with which multiple burials harnessed a temporal depth in their construction, indicating that temporality was a key component in the constitution of personhood for those interred. Ultimately, multiple burials were concerned with the articulation of 'association' between those interred and the contexts within which they were situated. It appears to be the case that this association was not achieved simply through the use of shared space, but through the use of shared time.

The final research question of this study aimed to explore the potential for animals and things to emerge as persons through their relations with other beings in multiple burials. This involved exploring more fully how animals and some ceremonially treated weapons were included in these contexts— with a particular focus on the modes of their treatment and deposition— to ascertain whether shared experiences in death suggest a shared ontological status in Viking Age minds.

I found that, while the similar bodily treatment and burial that animals and things received may have served as a metaphor for the reconfiguration of the deceased from the state of a living person to that of 'the dead', the shared embodied experiences of animals, things, and humans in these contexts intimates a potential that each entity shared a similarity in being that required shared ritual processing. In this way, animals and things contributed much to the constitution of human personhood through their embodied agency. Through these same means, humans contributed to the emergence of animal–persons and thing–persons through their embodied, emotional, and cosmological relations. In Viking Age burials, the configuration of animal bodies, thing bodies and human bodies visibly attests to an ontic fluidity of being a *person*, while also demonstrating the countless ways that each being shaped the personhood of the other over the course of their lives— through a process of mutual becoming extending into death.

Future Research Directions

During the course of completing this thesis, a number of tantalising research avenues emerged which could valuably build upon the findings presented herein. Firstly, I concluded the last chapter suggesting that we focus our analysis on persons in burial archaeology, rather than on bodies. A productive offshoot of

this research would be to investigate a specific corpus of Viking Age burials with analysis oriented on the identification of multiple 'persons', rather than multiple bodies. This may yield valuable insights into the nature of multiple burial based solely on the way that multiple persons were buried, removing the distortion produced by potentially extraneous bodies.

Secondly, a comparison between the multiple burials of Hedeby and Kaupang show that the rite was practiced considerably differently in both settlements, particularly in terms of their frequency and structural form. While the selection of Kaupang and Hedeby served the purposes of doctoral research— needing to be well-documented, accessible, and measured— the selection of these samples imposed some obvious limitations. Importantly, both Kaupang and Hedeby were urban sites, meaning that burials there were the product of a wider range of people, customs, objects and ideas than in other, more isolated areas of the region. The disparity between the Kaupang multiple burial practice and that of Hedeby indicate that they were probably not closely representative of the practice in the wider region. Thus, a more expansive analysis of multiple burials from across Norway and Denmark may be useful in establishing the nature of the rite as it occurs more broadly across Viking Age Scandinavia.

Thirdly, this research found that the temporal dimension of multiple burials was of the utmost importance in constituting personhood for Viking Age individuals, despite the fact that a minority of burials had reliable chronological information available. This aspect of multiple burial practice deserves further analysis to more finely examine the scales of time used in their construction. A further study based upon modern and professionally excavated multiple burials with reliable internal chronologies would be seminal in confirming the significance of time in Viking Age multiple burial practices as documented in this thesis.

Fourthly, it is clear that the construction of multiple burials had a strong link with settlement strategies in Scandinavia and across the Diaspora. However, these two contexts were exposed to vastly different socio-political influences. A more finely tuned analysis of multiple burial on a regional basis would help clarify some of the patterns documented in this research.

In the Scandinavian context, we could more closely investigate how multiple burial operated as a function of inheritance law and land ownership traditions, perhaps even in combination with the rune stone evidence which may lead to a broader understanding of the relationship of these two material strategies.

In the Western Diaspora, patterns of multiple burial use could yield valuable insights into its role in a colonial setting. In Iceland, this could give context to settlement strategies and the assertion of colonial identities in the absence of a pre-existing local population, while an analysis focused on the British Isles may better contextualise their role in the negotiation of social relations in a contested 'contact' landscape and contribute to current debates on the nature of the diasporic experience, the composition of settler groups and their responses to colonial life (Helgason et al. 2002; Goodacre et al. 2005; Price and Gestsdóttir 2006; Leonard 2011; Norstein 2014).

Specifically, a number of studies have explored the nature of settlement through paleogenetic evidence and how the evidence of the Western Diaspora reflects social, political and economic conditions in Scandinavia. These studies have hinted that themes concerning the family (i.e. marriage, population demographics, wealth, social status) may have acted as push and pull factors as causative triggers for the Viking Age. However, an in-depth analysis of multiple

burials demonstrating connections to the activities of the Great Army may provide further insight into the composition of the *lið*, the role of the family in the Scandinavian diaspora, and the nature of the connection between multiple burial and military activity.

Closing

It is easy to be overwhelmed by the task of exploring the constitution of personhood. At any one time, there are so many different ways of being in the world. All of the possibilities that reside at the intersection of people's thoughts, bodies, things, emotions, landscapes and memories, at just one specific moment in time, could be differently configured a thousand times over. Add to this the passage of a thousand years and the task becomes seriously daunting— but not impossible.

Multiple burials are a good place to start, being defined, as they are, by the relationships they encompass. They are constellations of material, spatial and temporal complexities, all working together to produce persons of many different forms. Concepts of the body were made in the image of humans, animals and things, and their manipulations produced persons, simultaneously, of different materialities and shared ontologies. Multiple burials also leveraged various temporal scales in articulating relationships between persons, thereby uniting what came 'before' with what is 'now', creating persons of shared time in Viking Age minds. The potentialities of the interactions evidenced within multiple burial are innumerable and, by no means, has this exploration exhausted the scope of what it was to be a person during the Viking Age. But, it is hoped that the findings presented here serve as a starting point from which further explorations of Viking Age persons can take shape.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Adam of Bremen [1959] Published as *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Francis J. Tschan. New York: Columbia University Press.

Ibn Fadlān [2012] Published as *Ibn Fadlān and the Land of Darkness: Arab Travellers in the Far North*. Translated with an Introduction by Paul Lunde and Caroline Stone. London: Penguin UK.

Ibn Rustah [1980] Published in P. Foote and D.M. Wilson (eds) *The Viking Achievement: the society and culture of early medieval Scandinavia*. 2nd Edition. London, Sidgwick & Jackson.

Saxo Grammaticus [2015] Published as *Gesta Danorum: The History of the Danes*. Edited by Karsten Friis-Jensen, translated by Peter Fisher. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Saga of Olaf Tryggvason [2003] Published as *The Saga of Olaf Tryggvason* by Oddr Snorrason. Translated from the Icelandic with Introduction and Notes by Theodore M. Andersson. Ithaca: Cornell University Press

Sigurdarkvida in skamma – The Short Song of Sigurd [2013] Published in *The Elder Edda*. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Andy Orchard. London: Penguin Classics.

Thietmar of Merseburg [2013] Published in *Ottonian Germany: The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*. Translated and annotated by David A. Warner. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Referenced Works

Aannestad, H. L. 2018. Charisma, Violence and Weapons: The Broken Swords of the Vikings. In M. Vedeler, I. M. Røstad, E. S. Kristoffersen, & Z. T. Glørstad, eds., *Charismatic Objects: From Roman Times to the Middle Ages*, Oslo: Cappelen Damm AS, pp.147–168.

Aannestad, H. L., and Glørstad, Z. T. 2017. Kvinner og båtbegravelser i vikingtiden. In K. Kjesrud & N. Løkka, eds., *Dronningen i vikingtid og middelalder*, Oslo: Spartacus, pp.155–183.

- Alberti, B., and Marshall, Y. 2009. Animating Archaeology: Local Theories and Conceptually Open-ended Methodologies. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 19(03):344.
- Ambrosiani, B. 2001. *Excavations in the Black Earth 1990-1995. Eastern Connections. Part One: The Falcon Motif*, Stockholm: Birka Project for Riksantikvarieämbetet.
- Andersson, G. 2005. With Thor on our side. The symbolism of the Thor hammer-ring in Viking Age burial ritual. In T. Artelius & F. Svanberg, eds., *Dealing with the dead: Archaeological Perspectives on Prehistoric Scandinavian Burial Ritual*, Stockholm: National Heritage Board, pp.45–62.
- Andrén, A. 2013. Places, Monuments, and Objects: The Past in Ancient Scandinavia. *Scandinavian Studies* 85(3):267–281.
- Androschuk, F. 2005. En man i Osebergsgraven? *Fornvännen* 100(2):115–128.
- Arbman, H. 1940. *Birka I: Die Gräber. Untersuchungen und Studien*, Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell.
- Arcini, C. 2009. Losing Face: The Worldwide Phenomenon of Ancient Prone Burial. In I.-M. Back Danielsson, I. Gustin, A. Larsson, N. Myrberg Burström, & S. Thedeén, eds., *Döda personers sällskap. Gravmaterialens identiteter och kulturella uttryck (On the Threshold. Burial Archaeology in the Twenty-First Century)*, Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, pp.187–202.
- Ardwisson, G. 1984. *Birka II. Systematische Analysen der Gräberfunde*, Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien.
- Arents, U., and Eisenschmidt, S. 2010. *Die Gräber von Haithabu*, Vol. Band 2, Neumünster: Wacholtz.
- Argent, G. 2010. Do the clothes make the horse? Relationality, roles and statuses in Iron age inner Asia. *World Archaeology* 42(2):157–174.
- Armstrong Oma, K. 2010. Between trust and domination: Social contracts between humans and animals. *World Archaeology* 42(2):175–187.
- Armstrong Oma, K. 2018. Transformative Theft of Past and Present: The Human-Horse Bond Reflected in the Biography of the Viking Period Gausel Bridle. In M. Vedeler, I. M. Røstad, E. S. Kristoffersen, & Z. T. Glørstad, eds., *Charismatic Objects: From Roman Times to the Middle Ages*, Oslo: Cappelen Damm AS, pp.125–145.
- Artelius, T. 2005. The revenant by the lake: spear symbolism in Scandinavian late Viking Age burial ritual. In T. Artelius & F. Svanberg, eds., *Dealing with the dead: archaeological perspectives on prehistoric Scandinavian burial ritual*, Stockholm: National Heritage Board, pp.261–276.

- Arwill-Nordbladh, E. 2003. "A Reigning Queen or the Wife of a King-Only?": Gender Politics in the Scandinavian Viking Age. In S. M. Nelson, ed., *Ancient Queens: Archaeological Explorations*, Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, pp.19–40.
- Back Danielsson, I.-M. 2007. *Masking Moments: The Transitions of Bodies and Beings in Late Iron Age Scandinavia*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. Stockholm University.
- Barad, K. 2003. Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28(3):801–831.
- Barrett, J. H., Beukens, R., Simpson, I., Ashmore, P., Poaps, S., and Huntley, J. 2000. What Was the Viking Age and When did it Happen? A View from Orkney. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 33(1):1–39.
- Batey, C. E., and Paterson, C. 2013. A Viking burial at Balnakeil, Sutherland. In A. Reynolds & L. Webster, eds., *Early Medieval Art and Archaeology in the Northern World: Studies in Honour of James Graham-Campbell*, Leiden: Brill, pp.631–661.
- Becker, K. 2013. Transforming identities-New approaches to bronze age deposition in Ireland. *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 79:225–263.
- Bell, C. 1997. *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Benedictow, O. J. 1985. The Milky Way in History: Breast Feeding, Antagonism between the Sexes and Infant Mortality in Medieval Norway. *Scandinavian Journal of History* 10(1):19–53.
- Benedictow, O. J. 1996. The Demography of the Viking Age and the High Middle Ages in the Nordic Countries. *Scandinavian Journal of History* 21(3):151–182.
- Benedictow, O. J. 2003. Demographic Conditions. In K. Helle, ed., *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia. Volume 1. Prehistory to 1520*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.235–249.
- Bennett, J. 2010. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Bersu, G., and Wilson, D. M. 1966. *Three Viking Graves in the Isle of Man*, London: Society for Medieval Archaeology.
- Biddle, M., and Kjølbye-Biddle, B. 1992. Repton and the Vikings. *Antiquity* 66:36–51.
- Biddle, M., and Kjølbye-Biddle, B. 2001. Repton and the "great heathen army" 873-4. In J. Graham-Campbell, R. A. Hall, J. Jesch, & D. N. Parsons, eds., *Vikings and the Danelaw: select papers from the proceedings of the thirteenth Viking congress, Nottingham and York, 21-30 August 1997*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp.45–96.
- Bietti Sestieri, A. M., Salzani, L., Giardino, C., and Verly, G. 2013. Ritual treatment of weapons as a correlate of structural change in the Italian LBA communities: the

bronze hoard of Pila del Brancon (Nogara, Verona). *Rivista Di Scienze Preistoriche* 63:155–169.

Bill, J. 2016. Protecting Against the Dead? On the Possible Use of Apotropaic Magic in the Oseberg Burial. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 26(1):141–155.

Bill, J., and Daly, A. 2012. The Plundering of the Ship Graves from Oseberg and Gokstad. *Antiquity* 86:808–824.

Blakelock, E. S. 2018. *The Early Medieval Cutting Edge of Technology: An archaeometallurgical, technological and social study of the manufacture and use of Anglo-Saxon and Viking iron knives, and their contribution to the early medieval iron economy*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. University of Bradford.

Blindheim, C., and Heyerdahl-Larsen, B. 1995. *Kaupang-Funnene: Gravplassene i Bikjholbergene/Lamøya undersøkelsen 1950-1957. Bind II: Del A. Gravskikk*, Vol. Bind II A, Oslo: Universitets Oldsaksamling.

Blindheim, C., Heyerdahl-Larsen, B., and Ingstad, A. S. 1999. *Kaupang-funnene. Bind IIB. Gravplassene i Bikjholbergene/Lamøya. Undersøkelsen 1950–1957. Del B. Oldsaksformer.*, Oslo: Universitetet i Oslo.

Boldsen, J. L. 1984. Palaeodemography of two southern Scandinavian medieval communities. *Meddelanden Från Lunds Universitets Historiska Museum (New Series)* 5:107–115.

Borić, D., Harris, O. J. T., Miracle, P., and Robb, J. 2013. The Limits of the Body. In J. Robb & O. J. T. Harris, eds., *The Body in History: Europe from the Palaeolithic to the Future*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.32–63.

Bourdieu, P. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Boyd, B. 2017. Archaeology and Human–Animal Relations: Thinking Through Anthropocentrism. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 46:299–316.

Brink, S. 2008. *Lord and lady, bryti and deigja: some historical and etymological aspects of family, patronage and slavery in early Scandinavia and Anglo-Saxon England*, London: Published for University College London by the Viking Society for Northern Research.

Brink, S. 2012. Slavery in the Viking Age. In S. Brink & N. S. Price, eds., *The Viking World*, Abingdon: Routledge, pp.49–56.

Brittain, M., and Harris, O. J. T. 2010. Enchaining arguments and fragmenting assumptions: Reconsidering the fragmentation debate in archaeology. *World Archaeology* 42(4):581–594.

Brøgger, A. W. 1945. Oseberggraven — Haugbrottet. *Viking* 9:1–44.

Brookes, S. 2010. Monuments and Minds: Monument Re-use in Scandinavia in the

- Second Half of the First Millennium A.D. *European Journal of Archaeology* 13(1):130–131.
- Brück, J. 1995. A place for the dead: the role of human remains in Late Bronze Age Britain. *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 61:245–277.
- Brück, J. 2004. Material metaphors: The relational construction of identity in Early Bronze Age burials in Ireland and Britain. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 4(3):307–333.
- Brück, J. 2006a. Death, Exchange and Reproduction in the British Bronze Age. *European Journal of Archaeology* 9(1):73–101.
- Brück, J. 2006b. Fragmentation, personhood and the social construction of technology in Middle and Late Bronze Age Britain. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 16(3):297–315.
- Brunning, S. E. 2013. *The “Living” Sword in Early Medieval Northern Europe*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. University College London.
- Brunning, S. E. 2015. “(Swinger of) the Serpent Wounds”: Swords and Snakes in the Viking Mind. In J. Hines & C. Cubitt, eds., *Representing Beasts in Early Medieval England and Scandinavia*, Woodbridge: Boydell Press, pp.53–72.
- Brunning, S. E. 2017. Crossing Edges? “Person-like” Swords in Anglo-Saxon England. In S. Semple, C. Orsini, & S. Mui, eds., *Life on the edge: Social, Political and Religious Frontiers in Early Medieval Europe*, Braunschweig: Braunschweigesches Landesmuseum, pp.409–417.
- Buikstra, J. E., and Ubelaker, D. H. 1994. Standards for data collection from human skeletal remains. In *Proceedings of a Seminar at the Field Museum of Natural History, organized by Jonathan Haas*, Fayetteville: Arkansas Archeological Survey.
- Burström, N. M. 2014. Things in the Eye of the Beholder: A Humanistic Perspective on Archaeological Object Biographies. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 47(1):65–82.
- Busby, C. 1997. Permeable and partible persons: a comparative analysis of gender and body in South India and Melanesia. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 3(2):261–278.
- Butterfield, V. 2017. *Broken: Consolidating Killed Objects and Conservation*, Unpublished Masters Thesis. University College London.
- Callow, C. 2006. First steps towards an archaeology of children in Iceland. *Archaeologia Islandica* 5:55–96.
- Carlsson, D. 1999. “Ridanäs”: *Vikingahamnen i Fröjel*, Visby: ArkeoDok.
- Chapman, J. 2000. *Fragmentation in archaeology: people, places and broken objects in the prehistory of south-eastern Europe*, London: Routledge.

- Chapman, J. 2008. Object Fragmentation and Past Landscapes. In B. David & J. Thomas, eds., *Handbook of Landscape Archaeology*, London: Routledge, pp.187–201.
- Chapman, J., and Gayadarska, B. I. 2006a. *Parts and wholes: fragmentation in prehistoric context*, Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Chapman, J., and Gayadarska, B. I. 2006b. *Parts and wholes: fragmentation in prehistoric context*, Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Chippindale, C. 1995. Editorial. *Antiquity* 69(264):435–443.
- Christensen, T. 1981. Gerdrup-graven. *Romu: Årsskrift Fra Roskilde Museum* 2:19–28.
- Christiansen, E. 2006. *The Norsemen in the Viking Age*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Coffey, G., and Armstrong, E. C. R. 1910. Scandinavian Objects Found at Island-Bridge and Kilmainham. *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature* 28:107–122.
- Connolly, M., Coyne, F., and Lynch, L. G. 2005. *Underworld: Death & Burial in Cloghermore Cave, Co. Kerry*, Bray: Wordell Ltd.
- Cooke, S. 2016. Trading Identities: Alternative Interpretations of Viking Horse Remains in Scotland. A Pierowall Perspective. *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology* 26(1):1–15.
- Cowen, J. D. 1967. Viking Burials in Cumbria: A Supplement. *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society* 67:31–34.
- Crawford, S. 1999. *Childhood in Anglo-Saxon England*, Stroud: Sutton Publishing.
- Croix, S. 2012. *Work and Space in Rural Settlements in Viking-Age Scandinavia: Gender Perspectives*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Aarhus University.
- Cross, P. J. 2011. Horse Burial in First Millennium AD Britain: Issues of Interpretation. *European Journal of Archaeology* 14(1):190–209.
- Crossland, Z. 2010. Materiality and Embodiment. In D. Hicks & M. C. Beaudry, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.386–405.
- Csordas, T. J. 1990. Embodiment Paradigm for Anthropology. *Ethos* 18(1):5–47.
- Csordas, T. J. 1994. Introduction: the body as representation and being-in-the-world. In T. J. Csordas, ed., *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.1–26.
- Daskalaki, E., Andersson, L., Wilerslev, E., and Götherström, A. 2014. Mitochondrial DNA reveals a lack of kin relations in a suspected Viking age family constellation

- from a Swedish proto-Christian burial site. In *Archaeological Genetics - Approaching Human History through DNA Analysis*, Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, pp.37–39.
- Davidson, H. E. 1968. *The Road to Hel: A Study of the Conception of the Dead in Old Norse Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Davidson, H. E. 1998. *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England: Its Archaeology and Literature*, Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Ltd.
- Dobres, M. A. 1999. Technology's links and chaînes: the processual unfolding of technique and technician. In M.-A. Dobres & R. Hoffman, Christopher, eds., *The Social Dynamics of Technology: Practice, Politics, and World Views*, Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, pp.124–146.
- Dommasnes, L. H. 1979. Et gravmateriale fra yngre jernalder brukt til å belyse kvinners stilling. *Viking* 42:95–114.
- Dommasnes, L. H. 1982. Late Iron Age in Western Norway. Female Roles and Ranks as Deduced from an Analysis of Burial Customs. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 15(1–2):70–84.
- Dommasnes, L. H. 1987. Male/Female Roles and Ranks in Late Iron Age Norway. In R. Bertelsen, A. Lillehammer, & J.-R. Næss, eds., *Were They All Men? An examination of sex roles in prehistoric society: acts from a workshop held at Utstein kloster, Rogaland, 2.-4. November 1979 (NAM-forskningsseminar nr. 1)*, Stavanger: Arkeologisk museum i Stavanger, pp.65–77.
- Dommasnes, L. H. 1991. Women, Kinship, and the Basis of Power in the Norwegian Viking Age. In R. Samson, ed., *Social Approaches to Viking Studies*, Glasgow: Cruithne Press, pp.65–73.
- Duday, H. 2006. L'archéothanatologie ou l'archéologie de la mort (Archaeothanatology or the Archaeology of the Death). In R. Gowland & C. Knüsel, eds., *Social Archaeology of Funerary Remains*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp.30–56.
- Duday, H. 2008. Archaeological proof of an abrupt mortality crisis: Simultaneous deposit of cadavers, simultaneous deaths? *Paleomicrobiology: Past Human Infections* 49–54.
- Duday, H., Cipriani, A. M., and Pearce, J. 2009. *The archaeology of the dead: lectures in archaeothanatology*, Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Duncan, W. N., and Schwarz, K. R. 2014. Partible, Permeable, and Relational Bodies in a Maya Mass Grave. In A. J. Osterholtz, K. M. Baustian, & D. L. Martin, eds., *Commingle and Disarticulated Human Remains*, New York: Springer, pp.149–170.
- Edwards, B. J. N. 2004. The West Seaton Viking Sword. *Transactions of the Cumberland*

and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society 4(3rd Series):123–132.

- Eldjárn, K., and Friðriksson, A. 2016. *Kuml og haugfé: úr heiðnum sið á Íslandi*, Third Edit, Reykjavík: Fornleifastofnun Íslands, Mál og menning, Þjóðminjasafn Íslands.
- Ellmers, D. 1979. Review of M. Müller-Wille, *Das Bootkammergrab von Haithabu. Berichte über die Ausgrabungen in Haithabu*; 8. Neumünster. *Praehistorische Zeitschrift* 54:234–237.
- Engdahl, K. 1990. *Människooffer i gravar i Skandinavien under yngre järnålder*, Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Stockholm.
- Eriksen, M. H. 2013. Doors to the dead. The power of doorways and thresholds in Viking Age Scandinavia. *Archaeological Dialogues* 20(2):187–214.
- Eriksen, M. H. 2015. The Powerful Ring. Door rings, oath rings, and the sacral place. In M. H. Eriksen, U. Pedersen, B. Rundberget, I. Axelsen, & H. Berg, eds., *Viking Worlds: Things, Spaces and Movement*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp.73–87.
- Eriksen, M. H. 2016. Commemorating Dwelling: The Death and Burial of Houses in Iron and Viking Age Scandinavia. *European Journal of Archaeology* 19(3):477–496.
- Eriksen, M. H. 2017. Don't all mothers love their children? Deposited infants as animate objects in the Scandinavian Iron Age. *World Archaeology* 49(3):338–356.
- Eriksen, M. H. 2019. *Architecture, Society, and Ritual in Viking Age Scandinavia: Doors, Dwellings, and Domestic Space*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fahlander, F. 2008. A Piece of the Mesolithic Horizontal Stratigraphy and Bodily Manipulations at Skateholm. In F. Fahlander & T. Oestigaard, eds., *The Materiality of Death: Bodies, Burials, Beliefs*, Oxford: Archaeopress, pp.29–46.
- Fahlander, F. 2016. The Materiality of the Ancient Dead: Post-burial Practices and Ontologies of Death in Southern Sweden AD 800–1200. *Current Swedish Archaeology* 24:137–162.
- Fahlander, F. 2018. Grave Encounters: Ontological aspects of post-burial interaction in the Late Iron Age of central eastern Sweden. *Primitive Tider* 20:51–63.
- Fahlander, F., and Oestigaard, T. 2008. The Materiality of Death: Bodies, Burials, Beliefs. In F. Fahlander & T. Oestigaard, eds., *The Materiality of Death: Bodies, Burials, Beliefs*, BAR Intern, Oxford: Archaeopress, pp.1–16.
- Fisher, G., and Loren, D. D. 2003. Introduction: embodying identity in archaeology. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 13(2):225–230.
- Fogelin, L., and Schiffer, M. B. 2015. Rites of Passage and Other Rituals in the Life Histories of Objects. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 25(4):815–827.

- Fowler, C. 2004. *The Archaeology of Personhood: An Anthropological Approach*, London: Routledge.
- Fowler, C. 2010. From Identity and Material Culture to Personhood and Materiality. In M. C. Beaudry & D. Hicks, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.352–385.
- Fowler, C. 2016. Relational Personhood Revisited. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 26(3):397–412.
- Fredriksen, P. D. 2005. karet/kroppen/identiteten. Spannforma leirkar i graver. In *Universitetet i Bergen Arkeologiske Skrifter Hovedfag/Master 1*, Bergen: University of Bergen, p.187–310.
- Gansum, T. 1995. *Jernaldergravskikk i Slagendalen: Oseberghaugen og Storhaugene i Vestfold: lokale eller regionale symboler: en landskapsarkeologisk undersøkelse*, Unpublished Mag.Art Thesis, University of Oslo.
- Gansum, T. 2004. Role the bones – from iron to steel. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 37(1):41–57.
- Gardeła, L. 2009. The Good, the Bad and the Undead. New Thoughts on the Ambivalence of Old Norse Sorcery. In A. Ney, H. Williams, & F. C. Ljungqvist, eds., *Á Austrvega. Saga and East Scandinavia. Preprint Papers of The 14th International Saga Conference Uppsala, 9th – 15th August 2009*, Vol. 1, Gävle: Gävle University Press, pp.285–294.
- Gardeła, L. 2011a. Buried with Honour and Stoned to Death: The Ambivalence of Viking Age Magic in the Light of Archaeology. *Analecta Archaeologica Ressoiviensia* 4:339–375.
- Gardeła, L. 2011b. Wiking bez głowy. Dekapitacja we wczesnośredniowiecznej Skandynawii. *Pomniki Dawnego Prawa* 13:36–71.
- Gardeła, L. 2012a. Bad death in the Viking Age. Apotropaic practices related to the burial of the dead. In A. Nordvig Mathias Valentin & L. H. Toring, eds., *The 15th International Saga Conference: Sagas and the Use of the Past. 5th –11th August 2012, Aarhus University*, Aarhus: Department of Aesthetics and Communication Department of Culture and Society Faculty of Arts, pp.124–125.
- Gardeła, L. 2012b. Pochówki i groby atypowe w świecie wikingów. Dawne problemy i nowe pytania. In J. Wrzeński & W. Dzieduszycki, eds., *Obcy, Funeralia*, Poznań: Stowarzyszenie Naukowe Archeologów Polskich, pp.379–401.
- Gardeła, L. 2013a. The Dangerous Dead? Rethinking Viking-Age Deviant Burials. In L. Słupecki & R. Simek, eds., *Studia Medieva Septentrionalia*, Studia Med, Vienna: Fassbaende, pp.99–136.

- Gardeła, L. 2013b. The Headless Norsemen: Decapitation in Viking Age Scandinavia. In L. Gardeła & K. Kajkowski, eds., *The Head Motif in Past Societies in a Comparative Perspective*, Bytów: Museum Zachodniokaszubskie w Bytowie, pp.88–155.
- Gardeła, L. 2014. Viking Death Rituals on the Isle of Man. In C. Larrington & L. Gardeła, eds., *Viking Myths and Rituals on the Isle of Man and Rituals on the Isle of Man*, Nottingham: The Centre for the Study of the Viking Age, University of Nottingham, pp.30–38.
- Gardeła, L. 2015. Face Down: The Phenomenon of Prone Burial in Early Medieval Poland. *Analecta Archaeologica Ressoviensia* 10:99–136.
- Gardeła, L. 2016. Worshipping the Dead: Viking Age cemeteries as cult sites? In M. Egeler, ed., *Germanische Kultorte: Vergleichende, historische und rezeptionsgeschichtliche Zugänge*, Band 24, München: Herbert Utz Verlag GmbH, pp.169–205.
- Geake, H. 1992. Burial Practice in Seventh-and Eighth-Century England. In M. O. H. Carver, ed., *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North-Western Europe*, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press.
- Giles, M. 2015. Performing Pain, Performing Beauty: Dealing With Difficult Death in the Iron Age. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 25(3):539–550.
- Gísladóttir, G. A. 2018. Email with Claire Ratican 22 November.
- Gjessing, G. 1943. Hesten i Førhistorisk Kunst og Kultus. *Viking* 7:5–144.
- Goldhahn, J., and Oestigaard, T. 2008. Smith and death – cremations in furnaces in Bronze and Iron Age Scandinavia. In C. Prescott, K. Chilidis, & J. Lund, eds., *Facets of Archaeology: Essays in Honour of Lotte Hedeager on her 60th Birthday*, Oslo: Unipub, pp.215–241.
- Goodacre, S., Helgason, A., Nicholson, J., ... Sykes, B. 2005. Genetic evidence for a family-based Scandinavian settlement of Shetland and Orkney during the Viking periods. *Heredity* 95(2):129–135.
- Gosden, C., and Marshall, Y. 1999. The Cultural Biography of Objects. *World Archaeology* 31(2):169–178.
- Gotfredsen, A. B. 2014. Birds in Subsistence and Culture at Viking Age Sites in Denmark. *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 24(3):365–377.
- Graham-Campbell, J. 1998. The Vikings in Orkney. In D. J. Waugh, ed., *The Face of Orkney: stones, skalds and saints*, Edinburgh: Scottish Society for Northern Studies, pp.128–137.
- Graham-Campbell, J., and Batey, C. E. 1998. *Vikings in Scotland: an archaeological survey*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

- Gräslund, A.-S. 1980. *Birka IV - The Burial Customs: A Study of the Graves on Björkö*, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International.
- Gräslund, A.-S. 2004. Dogs in graves – a question of symbolism? In B. Santillo Frizell, ed., *PECUS. Man and animal in antiquity. Proceedings of the conference at the Swedish Institute in Rome, September 9-12, 2002.*, Rome: The Swedish Institute in Rome, pp.167–176.
- Gräslund, A.-S. 2014. En hund begravnen: Hunden från stenålder till medeltid. In A.-S. Gräslund & I. Svanberg, eds., *Från renhållningshjon till modeaccessoar 10 000 år av relationer människa–hund i Sverige. Föredrag vid ett symposium i Uppsala 15 februari 2013.*, Uppsala: Författarna och Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur, pp.10–30.
- Gräslund, B. 2007. Fimbulvintern, Ragnarök och klimatkrisen år 536-537 e. Kr. *Saga Och Sed : Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademiens Årsbok* 93–123.
- Gräslund, B., and Price, N. S. 2012. Twilight of the gods? the “dust veil event” of AD 536 in critical perspective. *Antiquity* 86(332):428–443.
- Grieve, A. 2012. *The human-dog relationship in early medieval England and Ireland (c. AD 400-1250)*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis , University of Southampton.
- Grinsell, L. V. 1953. Early Funerary Superstitions in Britain. *Folklore* 64(1):271–281.
- Grinsell, L. V. 1961. The Breaking of Objects as a Funerary Rite. *Folklore* 72(3):475–491.
- Grøn, O., Hedeager Krag, A., and Bennike, P. 1994. *Vikingetidsgavpladser på Langeland*, Rudkøbing: Langelands Museum.
- Gurevich, A. J. 1985. *Categories of Medieval Culture*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Hadley, D. 2008. Warriors, Heroes and Companions: Negotiating Masculinity in Viking-Age England. In S. Crawford & H. Hamerow, eds., *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, Oxford: Oxford University School of Archaeology, pp.370–284.
- Hållans Stenholm, A.-M. 2006. Past Memories: Spatial Returning as Ritualised Remembrance. In A. Andrén, K. Jennbert, & C. Raudvere, eds., *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, changes and interactions. An international conference in Lund, Sweden, 3-7 June, 2007.*, Lund: Nordic Academic Press.
- Hållans Stenholm, A.-M. 2012. *Fornminnen. Det förflutnas roll i det förkristna och kristna Mälardalen*, Lund: Nordic Academic Press.
- Halstad McGuire, E.-L. 2009. *Manifestations of identity in burial: Evidence from Viking-Age graves in the North Atlantic diaspora*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Glasgow.
- Hamilakis, Y., and Pluciennik, M. 2002. *Thinking through the body: archaeologies of*

corporeality, New York: Kluwer Academic.

- Hansson, M. 1998. Graves, Grave-fields and Burial Customs – Variation as Theme: A Discussion of Late Iron Age Grave-fields in the Inland of Småland. *Lund Archaeological Review* (4):49–66.
- Haraway, D. J. 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, New York: Routledge.
- Haraway, D. J. 2003. *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, people, and significant otherness*, Vol. 1, Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.
- Haraway, D. J. 2008. *When Species Meet*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Harper, S. 2010. The social agency of dead bodies. *Mortality* 15(4):308–322.
- Harris, O. J. T., Cobb, H., Batey, C. E., ... Richardson, P. 2017. Assembling places and persons: a tenth-century Viking boat burial from Swordle Bay on the Ardnamurchan peninsula, western Scotland. *Antiquity* 91(355):191–206.
- Harris, O. J. T., Robb, J., and Borić, D. 2012. Multiple Ontologies and the Problem of the Body in History. *American Anthropologist* 114(4):668–679.
- Harrison, S. H. 2008. *Furnished Insular Scandinavian Burial: Artefacts and Landscape in the Early Viking Age*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Trinity College Dublin.
- Harrison, S. H., and Ó Floinn, R. 2014. *Viking Graves and Grave-Goods in Ireland*, Dublin: National Museum of Ireland.
- Hedeager, L. 1999. Skandinavisk dyreornamentik: Symbolsk repræsentation af en før-kristen kosmologi. In I. Fuglestad, T. Gansum, & A. Opedal, eds., *Et hus med mange rom. Vennebok til Bjørn Myhre på 60-årsdagen*, Stavanger: Arkeologisk Museum, pp.219–238.
- Hedeager, L. 2004. Dyr og andre mennesker – mennesker og andre dyr. Dyreornamentikkens transcendentale realitet. In A. Andrén, K. Jennbert, & C. Raudvere, eds., *Ordning mot kaos. Studier av nordisk förkristen kosmologi*, Vol. 4, Lund: Nordic Academic Press, pp.219–252.
- Hedeager, L. 2005. Animal representations and animal iconography. *Studien Zur Sachsenforschung* 15:231–245.
- Hedeager, L. 2010. Split Bodies in the Late Iron Age / Viking Age of Scandinavia. In K. Rebay-Salisbury, M. L. S. Sørensen, & J. Hughes, eds., *Body Parts and Bodies Whole: Changing Relations and Meanings*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp.111–118.
- Hedeager, L. 2011. *Iron Age Myth and Materiality: An Archaeology of Scandinavia AD 400-1000.*, Abingdon: Routledge.

- Hedenstierna-Jonson, C., Kjellström, A., Zachrisson, T., ... Storå, J. 2017. A female Viking warrior confirmed by genomics. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 164(4):853–860.
- Heinrich Harke. 2001. Cemeteries as Places of Power. In M. De Jonge, F. Theuws, & C. Van Rhijn, eds., *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, Leiden: Brill, pp.7–30.
- Helgason, A., Hickey, E., Goodacre, S., ... Sykes, B. 2002. mtDNA and the Islands of the North Atlantic: Estimating the Proportions of Norse and Gaelic Ancestry. *The American Journal of Human Genetics* 68(3):723–737.
- Hemmendorff, O. 1984. Människooffer: ett inslag i järnålderns gravritualer, belyst av ett fynd i Bollstanäs, Uppland. *Fornvännen* 79:4–12.
- Hendon, J. A. 2002. Archaeological Approaches to the Organization of Domestic Labor: Household Practice and Domestic Relations. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 25(1):45–61.
- Hill, E. 2013. Archaeology and Animal Persons: Toward a Prehistory of Human-Animal Relations. *Environment and Society* 4(1):117–136.
- Hodder, I. 2011. Human-thing entanglement: towards an integrated archaeological perspective. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 17(1):154–177.
- Hodder, I. 2014. The Entanglements of Humans and Things: A Long-Term View. *New Literary History* 45(1):19–36.
- Hodgson, C. 1832. An Account of some Antiquities found in a Cairn, near Hesketh-in-the-Forest, in Cumberland, in a Letter from Mr. Christopher Hodgson, to the Rev. John Hodgson, Secretary. *Archaeologia Aeliana* 2:106–109.
- Hofseth, E. H. 1981. *Fjellressursenes betydning i yngre jernalders økonomi: sammenlignende studie av bygdene øst og vest for vannskillet i Nord-Gudbrandsdal*, Stavanger: Arkeologisk museum i Stavanger.
- Hofseth, E. H. 1999. Historien bak handelskvinnen på Kaupang. Kvinne graver fra vikingtid langs Vestfoldkysten. *Viking* 62:101–130.
- Holbraad, M., and Pedersen, M. A. 2017. *The Ontological Turn: An Anthropological Exposition. The ontological turn : an anthropological exposition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Holck, P. 1987. *Cremated bones: a medical-anthropological study of an archaeological material on cremation burials.*, Oslo: Anatomical Institute, University of Oslo.
- Holck, P. 2006. The Oseberg Ship Burial, Norway: New Thoughts on the Skeletons from the Grave Mound. *European Journal of Archaeology* 9(2–3):185–210.
- Holmquist Olausson, L. 1990. “Älgmannen” från Birka. Presentation av en nyligen

undersökt krigargrav med människooffer, *Fornvännen* 85:175–182.

Horn, C. 2017. Combat and ritual — Wear analysis on metal halberds from the Danish Isles and the Cimbrian Peninsula. *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 14(March):515–529.

Hoskins, J. 1998. *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of People's Lives*, New York: Routledge.

Ingold, T. (Ed.). 1988. *What is an Animal?*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Ingold, T. 2000. From trust to domination: An alternative history of human–animal relations. In *The Perception of the Environment - Essays in livelihood, dwelling, and skill*, London: Routledge, pp.61–76.

Ingold, T. 2006. Rethinking the animate, re-animating thought. *Ethnos* 71(1):9–20.

Ingold, T. 2007. Materials against Materiality. *Archaeological Dialogues* 14(1):1–16.

Ingstad, A. S. 1995. Interpretation of the Oseberg. In O. Crumlin-Pedersen & B. M. Thye, eds., *The Ship as Symbol in Prehistoric and Medieval Scandinavia*, Copenhagen: National Museum of Denmark, pp.138–147.

Jarman, C. L. 2019. Email to Claire Ratican 6 July.

Jarman, C. L., Biddle, M., Higham, T., and Bronk Ramsey, C. 2018. The Viking Great Army in England: new dates from the Repton charnel. *Antiquity* 92(361):183–199.

Jennbert, K. 2003a. Ambiguous Truths? People and Animals in Pre-Christian Scandinavia. In J. Bergstøl, ed., *Scandinavian archaeological practice — in theory. Proceedings from the 6th Nordic TAG, Oslo 2001.*, Oslo: Institutt for arkeologi, kunsthistorie og konservering, Universitetet i Oslo., pp.212–230.

Jennbert, K. 2003b. Animal Graves: Dog, Horse and Bear. *Current Swedish Archaeology* 11:139–52.

Jennbert, K. 2006. The Heroized Dead: People, animals, and materiality in Scandinavian death rituals, AD 200–1000. In A. Andrén, K. Jennbert, & C. Raudvere, eds., *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, changes and interactions. An international conference in Lund, Sweden, 3-7 June, 2007.*, Lund: Nordic Academic, pp.135–140.

Jennbert, K. 2011. *Animals and Humans: Recurrent Symbiosis in Archaeology and Old Norse Religion*, Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Jennbert, K. 2014. Certain Humans, Certain Animals. Attitudes in the Long Term. In E. A. Cederholm, A. Björck, K. Jennbert, & A.-S. Lönngren, eds., *Exploring the Animal Turn: Human-Animal Relations in Science, Society and Culture*, Lund: Pufendorfinstitutet, pp.183–202.

- Jensen, B. 2016. Sacrifice and Execution: Ritual Killings in Viking Age Scandinavian Society. In A. García-Piquer & A. Vila-Mitjà, eds., *Beyond War: Archaeological Approaches*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp.1–22.
- Jochens, J. 1995. *Women in Old Norse Society*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Johnsen-Welinder, B., and Welinder, S. 1973. *Järnåldersgravfält i Mälardalen: 1. Horisontell stratigrafi på folkvandringstida gravfält; 2. Ett fyndtomt gravfält från den fyndtomma tiden*, Lund: CWK Gleerup.
- Johnson, K. M., and Paul, K. S. 2016. Bioarchaeology and Kinship: Integrating Theory, Social Relatedness, and Biology in Ancient Family Research. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 24(1):75–123.
- Jones, A. M. 2005. Lives in fragments? Personhood and the European Neolithic. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 5(2):193–224.
- Jones, A. M., and Boivin, N. 2010. The Malice of Inanimate Objects: Material Agency. *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.333–351.
- Jørgensen, L. 1987. Family Burial Practices and Inheritance Systems. The Development of an Iron Age Society from 500 BC to AD 1000 on Bornholm, Denmark. *Acta Archaeologica* 58:17–54.
- Joyce, R. A. 1998. Performing the body in pre-Hispanic Central America. *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 33(1):147–165.
- Kaliff, A. 1997. *Grav och kultplats: Eskatologiska föreställningar under yngre bronsålder och äldre järnålder i Östergötland*, Doctoral Thesis. Uppsala University.
- Kaliff, A., and Oestigaard, T. 2004. Cultivating Corpses. A Comparative Approach to Disembodied Mortuary Remains. *Current Swedish Archaeology* 12:83–104.
- Karras, R. M. 1990. Concubinage and Slavery in the Viking Age. *Scandinavian Studies* 62(2):141–162.
- Kivikoski, E. 1963. *Kvarnbacken: ein Gräberfeld der jüngeren Eisenzeit auf Aland*, Helsinki: Weilin & Göös.
- Klevnäs, A. M. 2007. Robbing the dead at Gamla Uppsala, Sweden. *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 22(1):24–42.
- Klevnäs, A. M. 2011. *Whodunnit? Grave-robbery in early medieval northern and western Europe*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Cambridge.
- Klevnäs, A. M. 2015a. Abandon Ship! Digging out the Dead from the Vendel Boat-Graves. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 48(1):1–20.

- Klevnäs, A. M. 2015b. Give and take: grave goods and grave robbery in the early middle ages. In A. M. Klevnäs & C. Hedenstierna-Jonson, eds., *Own and Be Owned: Archaeological approaches to the concept of possession*, Vol. 62, Stockholm: Department of Archaeology and Classical Studies, Stockholm University, pp.157–188.
- Klevnäs, A. M. 2015c. Overkill. Reopening graves to maim the dead in Anglo-Saxon England. In L. Gardela & K. Kajkowski, eds., *Limbs, Bones, and Reopened Graves in Past Societies*, Bytów: Muzeum Zachodniokaszubskie w Bytowie, pp.177–213.
- Klevnäs, A. M. 2016. ‘Imbued with the Essence of the Owner’: Personhood and Possessions in the Reopening and Reworking of Viking-Age Burials. *European Journal of Archaeology* 19(3):456–476.
- Knight, J. 2005. *Animals in Person: Cultural Perspectives on Human-Animal Intimacy*, Oxford: Berg.
- Knight, M. G. 2018. *The Intentional Destruction and Deposition of Bronze Age Metalwork in South West England*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. University of Exeter.
- Knüsel, C. J. 2014. Crouching in fear: Terms of engagement for funerary remains. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 14(1):26–58.
- Kopytoff, I. 1986. The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process. In A. Appadurai, ed., *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge, pp.64–91.
- Kristensen, T. S. 2006. *Husoffer? En feministisk analyse av nedleggelser i huskonstruksjoner gjennom jernalderen*, Unpublished Masters Thesis. University of Oslo.
- Kristensen, T. S. 2010. Husgeråd som husoffer. *Primitive Tider* 12:61–70.
- Kristiansen, K. 2014. The dialectics of gender: Ritualizing gender relations in Late Bronze Age Southern Scandinavia. In H. Alexandersson, A. Andreeff, & A. Büinz, eds., *Med hjärta och hjärna: En vänbok till professor Elisabeth Arwill-Nordbladh*, Göteborg: Göteborgs Universitet, pp.339–354.
- Kristiansen, K. 2016. Bronze Age Vikings? A Comparative Analysis of Deep Historical Structures and their Dynamics. In L. Melheim, H. Glørstad, & Z. T. Glørstad, eds., *Comparative perspectives on past colonisation, maritime interaction and cultural integration.*, Sheffield: Equinox Publishing Limited., pp.177–186.
- Kristinsdóttir, G. 1988. Kuml og beina- fundir á Austurlandi. *Arbók Hins Íslenska Fornleifafélags* 1987:89–97.
- Kristoffersen, S. 1995. Transformation in Migration Period animal art. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 28:1–17.
- Lang, J., and Ager, B. 1989. Swords of the Anglo-Saxon and Viking Periods in the British

- Museum: a Radiographic Study. In S. Chadwick Hawkes, ed., *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England*, Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, pp.85–122.
- Latour, B. 2005. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lee, C. 2008. Forever young: child burial in Anglo-Saxon England. In S. Lewis-Simpson, ed., *Youth and Age in the Medieval North*, Leiden: Brill, pp.17–36.
- Leifsson, R. 2018. *Ritual Animal Killing and Burial Customs in Viking Age Iceland*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Iceland.
- Leonard, A. 2011. Vikings in the Prehistoric Landscape: Studies on Mainland Orkney. *Landscapes* 1:42–68.
- Lillehammer, G. 2011. The Children in the Bog. In M. Lally & A. Moore, eds., *(Re)Thinking the Little Ancestor: New Perspectives on the Archaeology of Infancy and Childhood*, Oxford: Archaeopress, pp.47–62.
- Lillehammer, G. 2016. Transforming Images: Exploring Powerful Children. *Childhood in the Past* 1(1):94–105.
- Lindquist, M. 1981. Mylingar–offer, utsatta barn eller förhistoriska barnbegravningar? *Gotländskt Arkiv* 53:7–12.
- Lindstrøm, T. C. 2012. “I am the Walrus”: Animal Identities and Merging with Animals - Exceptional Experiences? *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 45(2):151–176.
- Lindstrøm, T. C. 2015. Agency “in itself”. A discussion of inanimate, animal and human agency. *Archaeological Dialogues* 22(2):207–238.
- LiPuma, E. 1998. Modernity and forms of personhood in Melanesia. In A. Strathern & M. Lambek, eds., *Bodies and Persons: Comparative Perspectives from Africa and Melanesia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.53–79.
- Losey, R. J., Bazaliiskii, V. I., Garvie-Lok, S., ... Sablin, M. V. 2011. Canids as persons: Early Neolithic dog and wolf burials, Cis-Baikal, Siberia. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 30(2):174–189.
- Losey, R. J., Bazaliiskii, V. I., Lieverse, A. R., Waters-Rist, A., Faccia, K., and Weber, A. W. 2013. The Bear-able Likeness of Being: Ursine Remains at the Shamanka II Cemetery, Lake Baikal, Siberia. In C. Watts, ed., *Relational Archaeologies: Humans, Animals, Things*, Abingdon: Routledge, pp.65–96.
- Loumand, U. 2006. The horse and its role in Icelandic burial practices, mythology and society. In A. Andrén, K. Jennbert, & C. Raudvere, eds., *Old Norse religion in long-term perspectives: Origins, changes and interactions. An international conference in Lund*,

Sweden, June 3-7, 2004, Lund: Nordic Academic Press, pp.130–134.

- Low, D. M., Batey, C. E., and Gourlay, R. 2000. A Viking Burial at Balnakeil, Sutherland. In J. R. Baldwin, ed., *The Province of Strathnaver*, Edinburgh: Scottish Society for Northern Studies, pp.24–34.
- Löwenborg, D. 2012. An Iron Age Shock Doctrine: Did the AD 536-7 event trigger large-scale social changes in the Mälaren valley area? *Journal of Archaeology and Ancient History* (4):1–29.
- Lucas, G., and McGovern, T. H. 2007. Bloody slaughter: ritual decapitation and display at the Viking settlement of Hofstaðir, Iceland. *European Journal of Archaeology* 10(1):7–30.
- Lund, J. 2009. *Åsted Og Vadested: Deponeringer, genstandsbiografier og rumlig strukturering som kilde til vikingetidens kognitive landskaber*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. University of Oslo.
- Lund, J. 2013. Fragments of a conversion: handling bodies and objects in pagan and Christian Scandinavia ad 800–1100. *World Archaeology* 45(1):46–63.
- Lund, J. 2015. Living Places or Animated Objects? Sámi Sacrificial Places with Metal Objects and Their South Scandinavian Parallels. *Acta Borealia* 32(1):20–39.
- Lund, J. 2017. Connectedness with things. Animated objects of Viking Age Scandinavia and early medieval Europe. *Archaeological Dialogues* 24(1):89–108.
- Lund, J., and Arwill-Nordbladh, E. 2016. Divergent Ways of Relating to the Past in the Viking Age. *European Journal of Archaeology* 19(3):415–438.
- Lyman, R. L. 1994. *Vertebrate taphonomy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Magnúsdóttir, A. G. 2012. Women and Sexual Politics. In S. Brink & N. S. Price, eds., *The Viking World*, Abingdon: Routledge, pp.40–48.
- Major, A. F. 1924. Ship Burials in Scandinavian Lands and the Beliefs That Underlie Them. *Folklore* 35(2):113–150.
- Mannering, U. 2013. Man or woman? – perception of gender through costume. *Danish Journal of Archaeology* 2(10):37–41.
- Mannermaa, K. 2008. Birds and burials at Ajvide (Gotland, Sweden) and Zvejnieki (Latvia) about 8000-3900 BP. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 27(2):201–225.
- Margaryan, A., Lawson, D., Sikora, M., ... Willerslev, E. 2019. Population Genomics of the Viking World. doi:10.1101/703405
- Marriott, M. 1976. *Hindu transactions: diversity without dualism*, Chicago: University of Chicago, Committee on Southern Asian Studies.

- Marshall, Y. 2013. Personhood in Prehistory. In D. Bolger, ed., *A Companion to Gender Prehistory*, Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, pp.204–225.
- Mauss, M. 1973. Techniques of the body. *Economy and Society* 2(1):70–88.
- McFarland, S. E., and Hediger, R. (Eds.). 2009. *Animals and Agency: An Interdisciplinary Exploration*, Leiden: Brill.
- McGuire, E. H. 2019. “Whim Rules the Child”: The Archaeology of Childhood in Scandinavian Scotland. *Journal of the North Atlantic* 11:13–27.
- McNeill, M. 1891. Notice of Excavations in a Burial Mound of the Viking Time, in Oronsay. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 25:432–435.
- Mejsholm, L. 2008. Constructions of early childhood at the syncretic cemetery of Fjälkinge—A case study. In S. Lewis-Simpson, ed., *Youth and Age in the Medieval North*, Leiden: Brill, pp.37–56.
- Merrifield, R. 1987. *The archaeology of ritual and magic*, London: Batsford.
- Meskel, L. 1996. The Somatization of Archaeology: Institutions, Discourses, Corporeality. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 29(1):1–16.
- Meskel, L. 1999. Archaeologies of Life and Death. *American Journal of Archaeology* 103(2):181–199.
- Meskel, L. 2000. Writing the Body in Archaeology. In A. E. Rautman, ed., *Reading the Body: Representations and Remains in the Archaeological Record*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp.13–21.
- Milek, K. 2012. The roles of pit houses and gendered spaces on Viking-Age farmsteads in Iceland. *Medieval Archaeology* 56(1):85–130.
- Mizoguchi, K. 1993. Time in the Reproduction of Mortuary Practices. *World Archaeology* 25(2):223–235.
- Moen, M. 2010. *The Gendered Landscape: A discussion on gender, status and power expressed in the Viking Age mortuary landscape*, Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Oslo.
- Moen, M. 2011. *The gendered landscape: a discussion on gender, status and power in the Norwegian Viking Age landscape*, Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Montserrat, D. 1998. *Changing bodies, changing meanings: studies on the human body in antiquity*, London: Routledge.
- Morgan, L. C. 1894. *An Introduction to Comparative Psychology*, London: Walter Scott.
- Mui, S. 2018. *Dead Body Language: Deciphering corpse positions in Early Anglo-Saxon England*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Durham University.

- Müller-Wille, M. 1970. Pferdergrab unter Pferdeopfer im frühen Mittelalter. *Berichten van de Rijksdienst Voor Het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek* 20:119–248.
- Näsström, B.-M. 2001. Det Største Offeret. In *Blot: tro og offer i det førkristne Norden*, Oslo: Pax Forlag A/S, pp.35–45.
- National Museums of Scotland. 2019. Sword (fragments) from Machrins, Colonsay, Inner Hebrides. Retrieved October 31, 2019, from <http://nms.scran.ac.uk/database/record.php?usi=000-000-099-757-C>
- Naumann, E., Price, T. D., and Richards, M. P. 2014. Changes in dietary practices and social organization during the pivotal late iron age period in Norway (AD 550-1030): Isotope analyses of Merovingian and Viking Age human remains. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 155(3):322–331.
- Nebelsick, L. 2000. Rent Asunder: Ritual Violence in Late Bronze Age Hoards. In C. F. E. Pare, ed., *Metals Make the World Go Round: The Supply and Circulation of Metals in Bronze Age Europe. Proceedings of a conference held at the University of Birmingham in June 1997.*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp.160–175.
- Nordberg, A. 2002. Vertikalt placerade vapen i vikingatida gravar. *Fornvännen* 2002(97):15–24.
- Nordeide, S. W. 2011. *The Viking Age as a Period of Religious Transformation: The Christianization of Norway from AD 560-1150/1200*, Turnhout: Brepols.
- Nordenstorm, L. 1994. Dödande vid begravningar: ett inslag i järnålderns gravritualer i komparativ religionshistorisk belysning (Killing at funerals. An element in Iron Age funeral ceremonies in the light of comparative religion). *Fornvännen* 89(4):265–278.
- Norstein, F. E. 2014. *Migration and the creation of identity in the Viking diaspora: A comparative study of Viking Age funerary rites from northern Scotland and Møre og Romsdal*, Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Oslo.
- Nøttveit, O. M. 2006. The Kidney Dagger as a Symbol of Masculine Identity-The Ballock Dagger in the Scandinavian Context. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 39(2):138–150.
- O'Brien, R., and Russell, I. 2004. The Hiberno-Scandinavian site of Woodstown 6, County Waterford. In *Recent Archaeological Discoveries on National Road Schemes*, Dublin: National Roads Authority, pp.111–124.
- Oma, K. 2004. Hesten og det heilage. Materialiseringa av eit symbol. In L. Melheim, L. Hedeager, & K. Oma, eds., *Mellom himmel og jord. Foredrag fra et seminar om religionsarkeologi, Isegran 31. januar-2. februar 2002*, Oslo: Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History, pp.68–81.

- Oppegaard, A. C. M. 2015. *Skjoldet og vikingen: Krigerens følgesvenn eller allemannseie? Skjoldet som gravgods ved Kaupang og Birka*, Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Oslo.
- Orton, D. C. 2012. Taphonomy and interpretation: An analytical framework for social zooarchaeology. *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 22(3):320–337.
- Overton, N. J., and Hamilakis, Y. 2013. A manifesto for a social zooarchaeology. Swans and other beings in the Mesolithic. *Archaeological Dialogues* 20(2):111–136.
- Palmer, C. 2019. *Defining the Self and Community: Multiple internment practices in early Anglo-Saxon England*, Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Oxford.
- Palmstierna, M., Frangou, A., Waillette, A., and Dunbar, R. 2017. Family counts: deciding when to murder among the Icelandic Vikings. *Evolution and Human Behavior* 38(2):175–180.
- Paterson, C., Parsons, A., Newman, R., Johnson, N., and Howard Davis, C. 2014. *Shadows in the Sand: Excavation of a Viking-Age Cemetery at Cumwhitton, Cumbria*, Lancaster: Oxford Archaeology North.
- Pedersen, A. 2006. Ancient Mounds for New Graves: An aspect of Viking Age burial customs in southern Scandinavia. In A. Andrén, K. Jennbert, & C. Raudvere, eds., *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, changes and interactions. An international conference in Lund, Sweden, 3-7 June, 2007.*, Lund: Nordic Academic, pp.346–353.
- Pedersen, A. 2014. *Dead Warriors in Living Memory— A Study of Weapon and Equestrian Burials in Viking-Age Denmark, AD 800-1000*, Copenhagen: University Press of Southern Denmark.
- Petersen, J. 1951. *Vikingetidens Redskaper*, Oslo: J. Dybwad.
- Pétursdóttir, Þ. 2007. “*Deyr fé, deyja frændr*”. *Re-animating mortuary remains from Viking Age Iceland*, Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Tromsø.
- Pétursdóttir, Þ. 2009. Icelandic Viking Age Graves: Lack in Material - Lack of Interpretation? *Archaeologica Islandica* 7(1978):22–40.
- Pétursdóttir, Þ. 2010. Orð í belg um íslenska kumlhestinn og uppruna hans. *Árbók Hins Íslenska Fornleifafélags* 101:185–209.
- Pétursdóttir, Þ. 2018. Email with Claire Ratican 22 November.
- Price, N. S. 2002. *The Viking Way: Religion and War in Late Iron Age Scandinavia*, Uppsala: Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University.
- Price, N. S. 2012. Dying and the Dead: Viking Age Mortuary Behaviour. In S. Brink & N. Price, eds., *The Viking World*, London: Routledge, pp.257–273.

- Price, N. S. 2019. *The Viking Way: Mind and Magic in Late Iron Age Scandinavia*, Second Edition, Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Price, T. D., and Gestsdóttir, H. 2006. The first settlers of Iceland: An isotopic approach to colonisation. *Antiquity* 80(307):130–144.
- Price, T. D., Peets, J., Allmäe, R., Maldre, L., and Oras, E. 2016. Isotopic provenancing of the Salme ship burials in Pre-Viking Age Estonia. *Antiquity* 90(352):1022–1037.
- Prummel, W. 1992. Early Medieval Dog Burials Among the Germanic Tribes. *Helinium*, pp.132–194.
- Raffield, B. 2016. Bands of brothers: a re-appraisal of the Viking Great Army and its implications for the Scandinavian colonization of England. *Early Medieval Europe* 24(3):308–337.
- Raffield, B., Greenlow, C., Price, N. S., and Collard, M. 2015. Ingroup identification, identity fusion and the formation of Viking war bands. *World Archaeology* 48(1):35–50.
- Raffield, B., Price, N. S., and Collard, M. 2017. Polygyny, Concubinage, and the Social Lives of Women in Viking-Age Scandinavia. *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 13:165–209.
- Rautman, A. E. 2000. *Reading the Body: Representations and Remains in the Archaeological Record*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Rebay-Salisbury, K., Sørensen, M. L. S., and Hughes, J. 2010. Body Parts and Bodies Whole: Introduction. In K. Rebay-Salisbury, M. L. S. Sørensen, & J. Hughes, eds., *Body Parts and Bodies Whole: Changing Relations and Meanings*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp.1–5.
- Reitz, E. J., and Wing, E. S. 2008. *Zooarchaeology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Reynolds, A. 2009. *Anglo-Saxon Deviant Burial Customs*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Richards, J. D. 2003. Pagans and Christians at the Frontier: Viking Burial in the Danelaw. In M. Carver, ed., *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe AD 300-1300*, Woodbridge: Boydell, pp.383–395.
- Richards, J. D., Beswick, P., Bond, J. M., ... Worley, F. 2004. Excavations at the Viking Barrow Cemetery at Heath Wood, Ingleby, Derbyshire. *The Antiquaries Journal* 84:23–117.
- Ritchie, A. 1976. Excavation of Pictish and Viking-age farmsteads at Buckquoy, Orkney. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 108:174–227.
- Ritchie, J. N. G., Glutton-Brock, J., Dickson, C. A., ... Wheeler, A. 1981. Excavations at

- Machrins, Colonsay. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 111:263–281.
- Roberts, H. M., and Hreiðarsdóttir, E. Ó. 2013. The Litlu-Núpar burials. *Archaeologia Islandica* 10:104–130.
- Roesdahl, E. 2016. *The Vikings*, Third Edition, London: Penguin Books.
- Roslund, M. 1990. Nittiotalets medeltidsarkeologi och det döda barnet. *Fornvännen* 85:283–292.
- Rudbeck, L., Gilbert, M. T. P., Willerslev, E., ... Dissing, J. 2005. mtDNA analysis of human remains from an early Danish Christian cemetery. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 128(2):424–429.
- Ruffoni, K. 2011. *Viking Age Queens: The Example of Oseberg*, Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Oslo.
- Ruiter, K., and Ashby, S. P. 2018. Different Strokes: Judicial Violence in Viking-Age England and Scandinavia. *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 14:153–184.
- Russell, N. 2011. *Social zooarchaeology: Humans and animals in prehistory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sahlins, M. 2011. What Kinship Is (Part One). *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 17(1):2–19.
- Satalecki, F. 2014. *Death as an architect of societies; Burial and social identity during the Viking Age in South-western Scania*, Unpublished Masters Thesis, Lund University.
- Sawyer, B. 1992. *Kvinnor och Familj i det forn- och Medeltida Skandinavien*, Skara: Viktoria Bokförla.
- Sayer, D. 2010. Death and the family: Developing generational chronologies. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 10(1):59–91.
- Sayer, D., Sebo, E., and Hughes, K. 2019. A Double-edged Sword: Swords, Bodies, and Personhood in Early Medieval Archaeology and Literature. *European Journal of Archaeology* 22(4):542–566.
- Sellewold, B. J. 1997. Children's Skeletons and Graves in Scandinavian Archaeology. In G. de Boe & F. Verhaeghe, eds., *Death and Burial in Medieval Europe: Papers of the "Medieval Europe Brugge 1997" Conference*, Vol. 2, Zellik: Instituut voor het Archeologisch Patrimonium, pp.15–25.
- Sellewold, B. J. 1999. *Picts and Vikings at Westness: anthropological investigations of the skeletal material from the cemetery at Westness, Rousay, Orkney Islands*. NIKU Scientific Report 010, Oslo: NIKU Foundation for Nature Research and Cultural Heritage Research.
- Sellewold, B. J., Hansen, U. L., and Jørgensen, J. B. 1984. *Iron Age Man in Denmark*, Vol.

3, Copenhagen: Det Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab.

- Shapland, F., and Armit, I. 2012. The Useful Dead: Bodies as Objects in Iron Age and Norse Atlantic Scotland. *European Journal of Archaeology* 15(1):116–98.
- Sharples, N., and Pearson, M. P. 1999. Norse Settlement in the Outer Hebrides. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 32(1):41–62.
- Shenk, P. 2002. *To Valhalla by Horseback? Horse Burial in Scandinavia during the Viking Age*, Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Oslo.
- Shetelig, H. 1910. Traces of the Custom of Suttee in Norway During the Viking Age. *Saga Book* 6:180–208.
- Shetelig, H. 1912. *Vestlandske Graver fra Jernalderen*, Bergen: J. Griegs Boktrykkeri.
- Shetelig, H. 1954. The Viking Graves. In *Part VI Civilisation of the Viking Settlers in Relation to Their Old and New Countries*, Oslo: H. Achehoug & Co., pp.65–111.
- Shetelig, H., and Falk, H. 1937. The Viking Age. In *Scandinavian Archaeology*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp.267–289.
- Sigurðsson, J. V. 1995. Forholdet mellom frender, hushold og venner på Island i fristatstiden. *Historisk Tidsskrift* 74:311–330.
- Sigurðsson, J. V. 2008. Becoming ‘Old’, Ageism and Taking Care of the Elderly in Iceland c. 900–1300. In S. Lewis-Simpson, ed., *Youth and Age in the Medieval North*, Leiden: Brill, pp.227–242.
- Sigurðsson, J. V. 2010. *Den vennlige vikingen: vennskapets makt i Norge og på Island ca. 900-1300*, Oslo: Pax Forlag.
- Sigurðsson, J. V. 2013. The Changing Role of Friendship in Iceland, c. 900-1300. In J. V. Sigurðsson & T. Småberg, eds., *Friendship and Social Networks in Scandinavia, c. 1000-1800*, Turnhout: Brepols, pp.43–64.
- Sigurðsson, J. V. 2017. *Viking Friendship: The Social Bond in Iceland and Norway, c. 900-1300*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Sikora, M. 2004. Diversity in Viking Age Horse Burial: A comparative of Norway, Iceland, Scotland and Ireland. *The Journal of Irish Archaeology* 12:87–109.
- Simpson, J. 1967. Some Scandinavian Sacrifices. *Folklore* 78(3):190–202.
- Sjøvold, T. 1944. *Studier i Vestfolds Vikingtid*, Oslo: Universitetets Oldsaksamling.
- Sjøvold, T. 1985. *The Viking Ships in Oslo*, Oslo: Universitetets Oldsaksamling.
- Skaarup, J. 1972. Rejsekammeraten. *Skalk* 1:4–9.

- Skaarup, J. 1989. Dobbeltgrave. *Skalk* 3:4–8.
- Skinner, M. 1987. Planning the archaeological recovery of evidence from recent mass graves. *Forensic Science International* 34(4):267–287.
- Skogstrand, L. 2016. *Warriors and Other Men: Notions of Masculinity from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age in Scandinavia*, Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing Limited.
- Sofaer Derevenski, J. 1994. Where are the Children? Accessing Children in the Past. *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 13(2):1–20.
- Solberg, B. 1985. Social Status in the Merovingian and Viking Periods in Norway from Archaeological and Historical Sources. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 18(1–2):61–76.
- Solberg, B. 2006. Signs, symbols and mortuary rituals in the period 200–500/70 AD in Norway. In R. Barndon, S. Innselset, K. K. Kristoffersen, & T. Lødøen, eds., *Samfunn, symboler og identitet. Festskrift til Gro Mandt på 70-årsdagen*, Bergen: University of Bergen, pp.223–234.
- Solli, B. 2008. Queering the Cosmology of the Vikings: A Queer Analysis of the Cult of Odin and “Holy White Stones.” *Journal of Homosexuality* 54(1/2):192–208.
- Sørensen, M. L. S. 2010. Bronze Age Bodiness- Maps and Coordinates. In K. Rebay-Salisbury, M. L. S. Sørensen, & J. Hughes, eds., *Body Parts and Bodies Whole: Changing Relations and Meanings*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp.54–63.
- Sørheim, H. 2011. Three prominent Norwegian ladies with British connections. *Acta Archaeologica* 82(1):17–54.
- Sprague, R. 2005. *Burial Terminology: A Guide for Researchers*, Lanham: AltaMira Press.
- Squires, K. E. 2014. Through the flames of the pyre: The continuing search for Anglo-Saxon infants and children. In D. Hadley & K. A. Hemer, eds., *Medieval Childhood: Archaeological Approaches*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp.114–130.
- Staecker, J. 2005. The Concepts of imitatio and translatio: Perceptions of a Viking-Age Past. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 38(1):3–28.
- Stalsberg, A. 1982. Hver mann har ei hauk på hånd–ei heller falk på sverd. *DKNVS Årshäfte 1981, Arkeologisk Serie* 8:46–65.
- Stefánsdóttir, A., and Hermannsdóttir, Á. 2018. *Kumlfundur við Eldvatn, Skaftártungu. Yfirlit yfir fornleifarannsóknir 2016*, Reykjavík: Minjastofnun Ísland.
- Stelter, K. D. 2014. *The Horse and the Norse: Reconstructing the Equine in Viking Iceland*, Unpublished MLitt Thesis, University of Glasgow.
- Stilborg, O. 2001. Temper for the sake of coherence: Analyses of bone- and chaff-

- tempered ceramics from Iron Age Scandinavia. *European Journal of Archaeology* 4(3):398–404.
- Stoodley, N. 1999. *The spindle and the spear: a critical enquiry into the construction and meaning of gender in the early Anglo-Saxon burial rite* (British Archaeological Reports Vol. 288). Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Stoodley, N. 2002. Multiple Burials, Multiple Meanings? Interpreting the Early Anglo-Saxon Multiple Interment. In S. Lucy & A. Reynolds, eds., *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales*, London: The Society for Medieval Archaeology, pp.103–121.
- Strathern, M. 1988. *The gender of the gift: problems with women and problems with society in Melanesia*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Stylegar, F.-A. 2007. The Kaupang Cemeteries Revisited. In D. Skre, ed., *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, Vol. 1, Oslo: Aarhus University Press and the Kaupang Excavation Project, pp.65–128.
- Stylegar, F.-A. 2010. Hvorfor er det færre knivve- enn mannsgraver fra vikingtiden i Norge? *Primitive Tider* 12:71–80.
- Sundqvist, M. 1993. Utgrävning pågår! Om storhögarna i Husby-Långhundra. In G. Olsson, ed., *Långhundraleden - en seglats i tid och rum: 50 bidrag om den gamla vattenleden från Trålhavet till Uppsala genom årtusendena*, Uppsala: Arbetsgruppen Långhundraleden, pp.153–157.
- Svanberg, F. 2003. *Decolonizing the Viking Age 1*, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International.
- Tarlow, S. 1997. The Dread of Something After Death. In J. Carman, ed., *Material Harm: archaeological studies of war and violence*, Glasgow: Cruithne Press, pp.133–142.
- Taylor, R. L. 2005. *Deviant Burials in Viking-Age Scandinavia*, Unpublished Masters Thesis, University College London.
- Thäte, E. 2007. *Monuments and Minds: Monument Re-use in Scandinavia in the Second Half of the First Millennium AD*, Lund: Wallin & Dalholm.
- Toplak, M. S. 2015. Prone Burials and Modified Teeth at the Viking Age Cemetery of Kopparsvik: The Changing of Social Identities at the Threshold of the Christian Middle Ages. *Analecta Archaeologica Ressoiviensia* 10:77–98.
- Toplak, M. S. 2018. Deconstructing the deviant Burials - Kopparsvik and the Rite of Prone Burials in Viking Age Scandinavia. *META Historiskarkeologisk Tidskrift* 4:79–110.
- Van Gennep, A. 1960. *The Rites of Passage*. (Vizedom M. B. & G. L. Caffee, Trans.), London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

- van Haperen, M. C. 2010. Rest in pieces: an interpretive model of early medieval 'grave robbery.' *Medieval and Modern Matters* 1:1–36.
- van Haperen, M. C. 2013. The distributed dead: personhood from the perspective of reopened graves. In B. Ludowici, ed., *Individual and Individuality? Approaches towards an Archaeology of Personhood in the First Millennium AD*, Stuttgart: Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, pp.89–94.
- Viking Age Compendium. 2019. Westness Boss [Photograph]. Retrieved October 31, 2019, from http://www.vikingage.org/wiki/wiki/Shields_found_in_Britain#/media/File:NMS_Westness_Boss.jpg
- Viveiros de Castro, E. 1998. Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4(3):469–488.
- Walker, W. H. 2001. Ritual technology in an extranatural world. In M. Schiffer, ed., *Anthropological Perspectives on Technology*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, pp.87–106.
- Walter, T. 1999. *On Bereavement: The Culture of Grief*, Maidenhead, Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Wamers, E. 1985. *Insularer Metallschmuck in wikingerseitlichen Gräbern Nordeuropas: Untersuchungen zur skandinavischen Westexpansion*, Neumünster: Wachholtz.
- Wamers, E. 1994. König im Grenzland. Neue Analyse des Bootkammergrabes von Haithaby. *Acta Archaeologica* 65:1–56.
- Watt, C. 2013. Relational archaeologies: roots and routes. In C. Watts, ed., *Relational Archaeologies: Humans, Animals, Things*, Abingdon: Routledge, pp.1–20.
- Weil, K. 2010. A report on the animal turn. *Differences* 21(2):1–23.
- Welinder, S. 2001. The archaeology of old age. *Current Swedish Archaeology* 9:163–178.
- Welton, A. J. 2016. Encounters with Iron: An Archaeometallurgical Reassessment of Early Anglo-Saxon Spearheads and Knives. *Archaeological Journal* 173(2):206–244.
- Wengrow, D., and Graeber, D. 2015. Farewell to the “childhood of man”: Ritual, seasonality, and the origins of inequality. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 21(3):597–619.
- Wilkinson, D. 2013. The Emperor's New Body: Personhood, Ontology and the Inka Sovereign. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 23(3):417–432.
- Williams, G. 2019. *Weapons of the Viking Warrior*, London: Osprey Publishing.
- Williams, H. 2006. *Death and memory in early medieval Britain*, Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press.

- Williams, H. 2016a. Citations in Stone: The Material World of Hogbacks. *European Journal of Archaeology* 19(3):497–518.
- Williams, H. 2016b. Viking Mortuary Citations. *European Journal of Archaeology* 19(3):400–414.
- Wilson, D. M. 2008. *The Vikings in the Isle of Man*, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.
- Wolfe, C. 2003. *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Yanagisako, S. J. 1979. Family and Household: The Analysis of Domestic Groups. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 8:161–205.
- Zachrisson, T. 1994. The Odal and its Manifestation in the Landscape. *Current Swedish Archaeology* 2:219–238.
- Zachrisson, T. 2017. The background of the odal rights: an archaeological discussion. *Danish Journal of Archaeology* 6(2):118–132.
- Zoëga, G., and Murphy, K. A. 2016. Life on the Edge of the Arctic: The Bioarchaeology of the Keldudalur Cemetery in Skagafjörður, Iceland. *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 26(4):574–584.